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OF
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EMBRACING
ANECDOTES
ILLUSTRATIVE OF HIS CHARACTER.

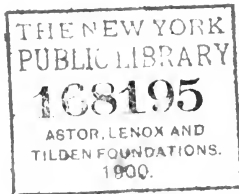
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PREFACE.



THE definition of history — “philosophy teaching by example,” is much more correctly applied to the history of a life, or BIOGRAPHY, than to a general narrative, in which *events* are necessarily more the objects of description than character. And youth, who seem guided in their pursuit of reading by a sort of instinct, which directs them to that by which they receive the most distinct ideas and vivid impressions, universally prefer biography. They not only like to hear how the great and wise thought and acted, in connection with public events, but to understand something of the private life and personal history of those who fill a large place in the annals of the world.

The life of Franklin, here presented, has been written with three leading objects: to bring forward important passages in his life, not usually introduced in abridgements, to give the juvenile reader the benefit of his good example, and to connect, as cause and effect, the errors in his life, which Franklin himself ingenuously acknowledges, with the consequences of those errors. We have not presented him as a *perfect* model for imitation, for such a model is to be found in no human being.

Free use has been made of the autobiography left by himself, and of the continuation of his life by Sparks, Stuber, and others. It is believed, that while much that is interesting has been necessarily omitted for want of space, this little work contains the most essential facts in his life, and is the most complete abridged biography of Benjamin Franklin that has ever been published.

PHILADELPHIA, April, 1846.

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LIFE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

CHAPTER I.

Birth of Franklin — Surnames — Franklin's Ancestors — His Uncle Benjamin — Acrostic on his Name — His early attempts at Verse-making — Character of his Father — Franklin at School — Is put to his Father's Trade — Dislikes it, and visits Mechanics at work — Anecdote of the Little Pier.



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on the 17th of January, 1706. He was thus, it will be perceived, twenty-six years the senior of George Washington; and was quite an old man in counsel when the difficulties commenced between the then Provinces of Great Britain, on this continent, and the mother country.

The birth of Franklin is recorded in the old Public Register, still preserved in Boston, as having taken place on the 6th of January. Our young

readers may here be reminded that, about the middle of the last century, what is termed the "new style" in recording dates was adopted. By the new style the day of his birth is stated as his biographers generally record it. It appears farther, from the records of the Old South Church, to which his parents belonged, that he was born upon a Sunday, and that, as they lived in Milk Street, directly opposite the church, he was baptized upon the same day.

It is easy to know now why one man is named Smith, another Jones, another Brown, and so on through the whole catalogue, because names descend from fathers to children; but it may have occurred to many of our readers to ask how the first man who wore a surname or family name, received it. Some circumstance, accidental perhaps, or some characteristic of the man gave him his title, and the tracing up of these curious matters of antiquity and biography has very naturally interested many of the wisest and the best of men. In our happy country, family or descent confers no privileges on one man over another; and Benjamin Franklin was one of those who earliest divested himself of prejudices and feelings which are not suited to a republic, and do not favour "the greatest good of the greatest number." But proper respect for

our progenitors naturally flows from the divine command, "honour thy father and thy mother;" and Dr. Franklin commences his own account of his life with the sentence, "I have ever had a pleasure in obtaining any little anecdotes of my ancestors." He made many inquiries among his relations in England for that purpose, and we shall briefly present the main results of that investigation.

The name Franklin was most probably, as Dr. Franklin supposes, assumed by the family when others took surnames, all over the kingdom, which was about the commencement of the fourteenth century. We have alluded to the accidental circumstances by which these names were selected. Sometimes, as in the Washington family, it was the name of an estate or manor; sometimes the word "son" or its equivalent was added or prefixed to the father's name, as John-son, Fitz-Herbert, Fitz being the old French for *fil*s; and sometimes, as in the case of Franklin, a word designating a class was adopted as a surname. Franklins were small freeholders, or country gentlemen, and are spoken of in the old English poets Chaucer and Spenser.

The ancestors of Benjamin Franklin lived in the village of Ecton, in Northamptonshire, for at least three hundred years previous to the time at which

he made his inquiries (1758), and he saw in the registers which he consulted, accounts of the marriages and deaths in the family from the year 1555. He ascertained also, that he was the youngest son of the youngest son, for five generations. Franklin's father had four brothers who grew up; two of whom, like himself, were bred to the business of dyers, while the eldest, as had long been the custom of the family, was a smith.

Josiah Franklin, the father of our illustrious countryman, married young, and came to Boston in or about the year 1685. He brought with him his wife and three children: four more were born after her arrival in this country. Franklin's mother, the second wife of his father, married in 1690, was Abiah, the daughter of Peter Folger, of Nantucket, and Benjamin was the youngest son of her ten children. Of his seventeen brothers and sisters, he states that he remembers to have seen thirteen sitting together at table, who all grew up to maturity and were married.

Franklin's uncle, Benjamin, for whom he was named, appears to have been the only one of his father's connexions who followed him to America. He had a great affection for his little namesake, and as this sentiment on the part of the uncle was recip-

located with respect by the nephew, Uncle Benjamin no doubt had much influence in the formation of the future philosopher. Boys have a natural affinity for guns and trumpets, and little Benjamin was not exempt from this common inclination. At four years of age his parents noticed the martial development, and in the pleasant family gossip between absent brothers, the dangerous fact was communicated to Uncle Benjamin in England. He answered as follows :

“TO MY NAMESAKE, ON HEARING OF HIS INCLINATION TO
MARTIAL AFFAIRS, *July 7th*, 1710.

“Believe me, Ben, it is a dangerous trade,
The sword has many marred, as well as made;
By it do many fall, not many rise—
Makes many poor, few rich, and fewer wise;
Fills towns with ruin, fields with blood; beside
'Tis sloth's maintainer, and the shield of pride.
Fair cities rich to day in plenty flow,
War fills with want to-morrow, and with woe.
Ruined estates, the nurse of vice, broke limbs and scars,
Are the effects of desolating wars.”

It is hardly to be supposed that, at the age at which master Benjamin received these lines he could have read them very attentively, or thoroughly have

considered them; but from the suggestions of so practical an adviser, it cannot be doubted that Franklin's character derived much of its sound common sense. Nor did Uncle Benjamin neglect to give his godson more general counsels. The following acrostic was addressed to him in the same year that the warning against the sword was written:

“Be to thy parents an obedient son;
Each day let duty constantly be done;
Never give way to sloth, or lust, or pride,
If free you'd be from thousand ills beside;
Above all ills be sure avoid the shelf,
Man's danger lies in Satan, sin, and self.
In virtue, learning, wisdom, progress make;
Ne'er shrink at suffering for thy Saviour's sake.

“Fraud and all falsehood in thy dealings flee,
Religious always in thy station be;
Adore the maker of thy inward part,
Now's the accepted time, give him thy heart;
Keep a good conscience, 't is a constant friend,
Like judge and witness this thy acts attend.
In heart with bended knee, alone, adore
None but the Three in One, for evermore.”

The namesake made early answer to these epistles of his uncle, since we find, three years afterward, while Benjamin was seven years old, the following lines addressed him by his uncle, evidently called

forth by some very creditable specimen of his godson's composition. The uncle writes:

“ 'Tis time for me to throw aside my pen,
When hanging sleeves read, write, and rhyme like men.
This forward Spring foretells a plenteous crop;
For, if the bud bear grain, what will the top!
If plenty in the verdant blade appear,
What may we not soon hope for in the ear!
When flowers are beautiful before they 're blown,
What rarities will afterwards be shown!
If trees good fruit un'noculated bear,
You may be sure 'twill afterward be rare.
If fruits are sweet before they 've time to yellow,
How luscious will they be when they are mellow!
If first years' shoots such noble clusters send,
What laden boughs, Engedi-like, may we expect in the end.”

Whether this most extravagant praise was in part playfulness, as it would certainly seem, or whether an uncle's partiality induced him to make extravagant predictions, Benjamin Franklin's useful life certainly makes the above lines seem prophetic. Perhaps his uncle had principally in his eye the belief that his godson would shine as a poet. At the age of about thirteen, however, when Benjamin had written, among other pieces, two street ballads which his brother printed, and which, as he terms it, “sold prodigiously,” his father checked his vanity. He

told his son the faults of the work, in terms which we may suspect were emphatic enough, since, in reviewing his early life in later years, Franklin speaks of these verses as "wretched stuff." His father also said to him that "verse-makers were generally beggars." "Thus," says Franklin, "I escaped being a poet, and probably a very bad one." The experience of Franklin's uncle, Benjamin, might have given his father a horror of verse-making. Although a pious and worthy man, and one of far from despicable talents, poverty and affliction were the uncle's lot through life. We have made thus particular mention of him, because we find in Franklin's life many traces of the effect of his early intercourse with that relative. Franklin's acquaintance with the Scriptures, and the frequent illustrations in his writings, drawn from the sacred volume, were in a great measure due to his uncle, whose highest efforts in poetry were versifications of the Psalms, and whose figures and metaphors were from the Scriptures, like that of the grapes of Engedi, whose vineyards Solomon celebrates in his song. And in the acrostic and the lines on war we find the themes of many of Poor Richard's essays. Early epistolary and other writing, and versifying, under the encouragement of Uncle Benjamin, aided in forming

Franklin's character, while the sound sense of his father prevented his efforts from taking a profitless direction, as we have already noticed in the matter of the street ballads.

Of Franklin's father there is a very pleasant portrait drawn by the philosopher himself; which we copy for the excellent hints which it embodies, both for parents and children:

“He had an excellent constitution, was of a middle stature, well set, and very strong. He could draw prettily, and was skilled a little in music. His voice was sonorous and agreeable, so that when he played on his violin, and sung withal, as he was accustomed to do after the business of the day was over, it was extremely agreeable to hear. He had some knowledge of mechanics, and on occasion was very handy with other tradesmen's tools. But his great excellence was his sound understanding, and his solid judgment in prudential matters, both in private and public affairs. It is true he was never employed in the latter, the numerous family he had to educate, and the straitness of his circumstances, keeping him close to his trade; but I remember well his being frequently visited by leading men, who consulted him for his opinion in public affairs, and

those of the church he belonged to ; and who showed a great respect for his judgment and advice.

“He was also much consulted by private persons about their affairs, when any difficulty occurred, and frequently chosen an arbitrator between contending parties. At his table he liked to have, as often as he could, some sensible friend or neighbour to converse with, and always took care to start some ingenious or useful topic for discourse, which might tend to improve the minds of his children. By this means he turned our attention to what was good, just, and prudent, in the conduct of life ; and little or no notice was ever taken of what related to the victuals on the table ; whether it was well or ill dressed, in or out of season, of good or bad flavour, preferable or inferior to this or that other thing of the kind ; so that I was brought up in such a perfect inattention to those matters, as to be quite indifferent what kind of food was set before me. Indeed, I am so unobservant of it, that to this day I can scarce tell a few hours after dinner of what dishes it consisted. This has been a great convenience to me in travelling, where my companions have been sometimes very unhappy for want of a suitable gratification of their more delicate, because better instructed, tastes and appetites.”

Franklin's mother was a discreet and virtuous woman, whom he mentions in terms of high respect and affection. The father died in 1744, at the age of 89, the mother in 1752, at the age of 85; both, it will be noticed, before their son, the subject of our book, obtained the high rank of which their early instructions laid the basis. Franklin, when he had become wealthy, caused a tablet with a suitable inscription to be placed over their graves in Boston; and this having become dilapidated, the citizens of that city caused a monument to be erected over the spot in 1827.

Franklin was originally intended to be educated for the ministry; his early readiness in learning, and the advice of friends, including his Uncle Benjamin, determining his father upon that course with him. He was accordingly placed at eight years of age at a grammar school, where, in less than a year, he was advanced from the class in which he entered to the next above, and would at the beginning of the next year, had he remained, have been still farther promoted. But his father's large family led him to shrink from the responsibilities and expenses which a collegiate education for Benjamin would have involved; and he removed his son from the grammar school to one where more practical

branches were taught—the writing and arithmetic, or commercial school of Mr. George Brownell.

Here he remained a little more than a year. He made great proficiency in writing; but like too many other boys, who fancy they may neglect what they do not like, he failed entirely in arithmetic, as indeed he had done at the grammar school before. As teachers and parents frequently have occasion to tell pupils that in after years they will be sorry for their negligence, young Franklin probably heard the caution without heeding it, while at school. But six years afterward, while an apprentice to his brother, he was *made ashamed* of his ignorance of arithmetic. Probably some occasion arose for the use of it, and Master Franklin was found deficient. He repaired the mischief by studying at once, in his leisure hours, what he had neglected at school; a mortification and labour which might have been spared, if he had attended to the proper thing at the proper time.

At ten years of age—and perhaps his term of schooling was shortened because of its apparent inutility—Benjamin was taken home by his father to help him in his business, which was that of a soap-boiler and tallow-chandler; a trade he had taken up on his arrival in this country, because he

found his own, that of a dyer, little called for. As Benjamin was young and light, he was employed in the easier work, such as cutting wicks, filling moulds, attending the shop, and "going of errands." At this employment, though he very much disliked it, he remained for about two years. His father, kindly willing to consult his inclinations in all reasonable things, took him round to see other artizans at work, in order to observe his inclination, and give him his choice of a trade, if possible. Benjamin was very desirous of going to sea, which his father earnestly opposed; and this was another reason why he wished to fix his son's attention upon land.

In the course of their walks together, the father and son visited joiners, bricklayers, turners, braziers, and such other mechanics as then pursued their occupations in Boston. Franklin says, that ever after this it was a pleasure to him to see good workmen handle their tools. It was also useful to him, as he learned so much by it as to be able to use carpenters' and other tools, when some trifling job required to be done and a workman was not at hand to attend to it. He could also, when he became Franklin the philosopher, construct little machines for his experiments, while the idea was

warm in his mind ; and probably he could do many such things much better than he could direct another to do them for him, He found through life, as all of us may find, that there is nothing better for a man to learn, than to learn to help himself. He made it a rule to extract good and knowledge from everything he saw ; and his father's humble soap laboratory undoubtedly furnished to the sage and philosopher many hints for conducting the experiments and making the discoveries which have since astonished the world, and the benefits of which can never be lost or forgotten.

There is one incident of his boyhood which we copy, in his own words, for the moral, which his father's correction impressed upon him, and which forms an excellent maxim, as a rule of conduct for boys and men :

“I had a strong inclination to go to sea ; but my father declared against it. But, residing near the water, I was much in it and on it. I learned to swim well, and to manage boats ; and, when embarked with other boys, I was commonly allowed to govern, especially in any case of difficulty ; and upon other occasions I was generally the leader among the boys, and sometimes led them into scrapes, of which I will mention one instance, as it

shows an early projecting public spirit, though not then justly conducted. There was a salt marsh which bounded part of the millpond, on the edge of which, at high water, we used to stand to fish for minnows. By much trampling we had made it a mere quagmire. My proposal was to build a wharf there for us to stand upon, and I showed my comrades a large heap of stones, which were intended for a new house near the marsh, and which would very well suit our purpose. Accordingly, in the evening, when the workmen were gone home, I assembled a number of my playfellows, and we worked diligently like so many emmets, sometimes two or three to a stone, till we brought them all to make our little wharf. The next morning the workmen were surprised at missing the stones, which had formed our wharf. Inquiry was made after the authors of this transfer; we were discovered, complained of, and corrected by our fathers; and, though I demonstrated the utility of our work, mine convinced me, that that which was not honest could not be truly useful."

CHAPTER II.

Unsuccessful attempt to make a Cutler of Franklin—He is bound Apprentice to his Brother James, a Printer—Unpleasantness of the connection—Faults upon both sides—Commencement of Franklin's Acquaintance with Collins—Criticisms of Franklin's Father upon his Prose—Franklin's determination to improve—The Books he met—Stoop! Stoop!—Franklin's Character and Experience as a Debater, and his Advice on the Subject to his Son—His Exercises in Composition—Vegetable Diet—Anecdote of the Fish.



THE result of the examination of trades, mentioned in the last chapter, was the pitching upon that of a cutler, which was just commenced in Boston by Samuel, the son of Uncle Benjamin, from London. But the sum which the cousin required as a fee for teaching Benjamin, as was at that time customary, displeased his father, and this pursuit was abandoned. We may fairly presume, however, since Benjamin Franklin never suffered any opportunity to acquire practical knowledge to pass unimproved, that even the short time he spent with the cutler taught him something which was afterward of service.

At this time, 1717, Franklin's brother James returned from England, with a press and types, and commenced the business of a printer in Boston. The inclination which Benjamin had shown for books and reading, and the failure to fix upon any other occupation for him, determined his father to make him a printer. Benjamin had still however a desire for the sea, one of his brothers having embraced that pursuit. But he accepted the offer of an apprenticeship to his brother James, as he preferred printing to the business of his father. He was much averse to being "bound;" but his father, anxious to guard against his going to sea, insisted upon it, and Benjamin at length gave way, and signed the indentures, while he was only twelve years old, by which he agreed to remain with his brother James until he was one-and-twenty.

The connection between his brother and himself was not a happy one; nor did it continue for the term for which the agreement was made. There were faults on both sides. Franklin writing, in 1771, when the coolness of the man had long displaced the pettishness of boyhood, and calm reflection induced him to do justice, says of his brother:

"Though a brother, he considered himself as my master, and me as his apprentice, and accordingly

expected the same services from me as he would from another, while I thought he degraded me too much in some he required of me, who from a brother expected more indulgence. Our disputes were often brought before our father, and I fancy I was either generally in the right, or else a better pleader, because the judgment was generally in my favour. But my brother was passionate, and had often beaten me, which I took extremely amiss; and, thinking my apprenticeship very tedious, I was continually wishing for some opportunity of shortening it, which at length offered in a manner unexpected. Perhaps this harsh and tyrannical treatment of me might be a means of impressing me with the aversion to arbitrary power, that has stuck to me through my whole life."

In another place, Franklin admits that "perhaps he was too saucy and provoking," and that though passionate, his brother was not an ill-natured man.

We have already mentioned the criticisms of Franklin's father upon verse-making, and the escape that the young man made from becoming a bad poet. The same kind friend and good counsellor directed him, by just criticisms, and well-directed advice, how to improve his prose, and encouraged him in what every little man and woman should

practise—the putting of his thoughts upon paper. A young man named John Collins, whose acquaintance he made while in his brother's office, had a debate with Franklin upon the question of “the propriety of educating the female sex in learning, and their ability for study.” Franklin defended the sex; Collins maintained that their abilities are unequal. The two young disputants were separated before their debate was closed, and the argument was continued by letter. These papers falling into the father's hands, he read them, and without entering into the subject in dispute, he took the occasion to talk to Benjamin about his style of writing. He observed that although Benjamin had the advantage of his antagonist in correct pointing and spelling, which he had learned at his trade, he fell far short in elegance of expression, in method, and in perspicuity, or clearness. Benjamin, who, as we shall often find occasion to say, never slighted an opportunity to improve, saw the justice of his father's remarks, and became more attentive to his manner of writing, being determined to improve his style.

As Franklin's writings are at once a model of good English, and a fountain of clearly arranged thoughts; as his illustrations are pertinent and happy, his allusions witty or grave, applied with equal felicity, his

arguments direct, his reasonings conclusive, and his positions plain, without being offensively, or as it is termed, "dogmatically" put, it is worth the young reader's while to understand, that this excellence was not attained without study and practice. Nor had he the advantages in early youth, of which nearly every one who takes up this book is in the possession, or has enjoyed. His scanty schooling we have noted. His thirst for reading was met only by a chance supply, a portion of which was apposite and proper, while by far the greater part was beyond his years.

Among the books which he early read were, Bunyan's Works, Burton's Historical Collections, Plutarch's Lives, De Foe's Essay on Projects, Locke on the Understanding, and a treatise of Dr. Mather's, entitled "An Essay to do Good." In his account of his early life Franklin says, this latter work gave him a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal events in his career. In a letter to Dr. Mather, the son of the author of the essay, written in 1784, when Franklin was in his 79th year, he says: "That book gave me such a turn of thinking, as to have an influence on my conduct through life; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a *doer of good*, than on

any other kind of reputation ; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book."

So important are early impressions ! We cannot resist introducing an anecdote of Franklin's youth, which we find in the same letter, as its point was another of Franklin's early lessons :

"The last time I saw your father was in the beginning of 1724, when I visited him after my first trip to Pennsylvania. He received me in his library, and on my taking leave showed me a shorter way out of the house, through a narrow passage which was crossed by a beam over-head. We were still talking as I withdrew, he accompanying me behind, and I turning partly towards him, when he said hastily, "*Stoop ! stoop !*" I did not understand him till I felt my head hit against the beam. He was a man that never missed any occasion of giving instruction, and upon this he said to me: '*You are young, and have the world before you ; stoop as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps.*' This advice, thus beat into my head, has frequently been of use to me ; and I often think of it when I see pride mortified, and misfortunes brought upon people by their carrying their heads too high."

Many societies and lyceums have been organized

in this country, among young people, avowedly upon the hints furnished in the experience of young Franklin, for eliciting knowledge in debate. It will therefore be both useful and interesting to read what he says about the subject: "A disputatious turn," he observes, "is apt to become a very bad habit, making people often extremely disagreeable in company, by the contradiction that is necessary to bring it into practice; and thence, besides souring and spoiling the conversation, it is productive of disgusts, and perhaps enmities, with those who may have occasion for friendship. Persons of good sense, I have observed, seldom fall into it." Those who personally knew Franklin have left the record, that he was not fond of taking part in debates which can reach no satisfactory or demonstrative termination; and that he was polite in his manners, and never gave a pointed contradiction to the assertions of his friends or his antagonists, but treated every argument with great calmness, and conquered his adversaries rather by the force of reason than assertion. How he formed such an agreeable manner of debating we are informed in his own words.

While an apprentice to his brother, and intent upon improving his style, as his father had recommended, he met with a treatise on logic, which gave

an example of a dispute in the *Socratic Method* of arguing by question and answer, and convincing, or at least of defeating a man by his own admissions. Afterward the young student procured a copy of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* of Socrates, in which he found many specimens of the Socratic Method. He was charmed with and instantly adopted it. He dropped abrupt contradiction, and positive argumentation, and put on the humble inquirer. Finding this method safest for him, and very embarrassing to those against whom he used it, he says: "I took delight in it, practised it continually, and grew very artful and expert in drawing people, even of superior knowledge, into concessions, the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither myself nor my cause always deserved." When Franklin was a few years older, he had an antagonist in daily argument, of whom he writes: "I used to work him so with my Socratic Method, and had trepanned him so often, by questions apparently so distant from any point we had in hand, yet by degrees leading him to the point, and bringing him into difficulties and contradictions, that at last he grew ridiculously cautious, and would hardly answer

me the most common question without asking first, 'What do you mean to infer from that?'"

As Franklin, the man, was remarkable for modesty and courteousness in debate, whatever errors Franklin, the boy, naturally fell into; and as one purpose of biography is to communicate the lessons of experience, and save others the necessity of going through disagreeable, and perhaps foolish trials, to learn what the old already know, we copy here Franklin's advice to his son upon the subject of debating:

"I continued the Socratic Method some few years, but gradually left it, retaining only the habit of expressing myself in terms of modest diffidence, never using, when I advance anything that may possibly be disputed, the words *certainly, undoubtedly*, or any others that give the air of positiveness to an opinion; but rather say, *I conceive*, or *apprehend*, a thing to be so and so; *It appears to me*, or *I should not think it*, so or so, *for such and such reasons*; or, *I imagine it to be so*; or, *It is so, if I am not mistaken*. This habit, I believe, has been of great advantage to me, when I have had occasion to inculcate my opinions, and persuade men into measures, that I have been from time to time engaged in promoting. And as the chief ends of conversa-

tion are to *inform* or to *be informed*, to *please* or to *persuade*, I wish well-meaning and sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive assuming manner, that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat most of those purposes for which speech was given to us. In fact, if you wish to instruct others, a positive dogmatical manner in advancing your sentiments may occasion opposition, and prevent a candid attention. If you desire instruction and improvement from others, you should not at the same time express yourself fixed in your present opinions. Modest and sensible men, who do not love disputation, will leave you undisturbed in the possession of your errors. In adopting such a manner, you can seldom expect to please your hearers, or obtain the concurrence you desire."

Franklin's time for improvement while in the printing-office was necessarily brief; but, by improvement of the hours before work commenced in the morning, by reading and studying evenings, and by close and judicious economy of time, which, as he makes Poor Richard say, "is an estate," he accomplished wonders—yet no more than any studious youth, so disposed, may do. In improving his English, it will be noticed, by the following extracts,

that he adopted the plan which is recommended in many, if not all school treatises upon rhetoric.

“About this time I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished if possible to imitate it. With that view, I took some of the papers, and making short hints of the sentiments in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should occur to me. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time, if I had gone on making verses; since the continual search for words of the same import, but of different length to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales in the *Spectator*, and turned

them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again.

“I also sometimes jumbled my collection of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavoured to reduce them into the best order before I began to form the full sentences and complete the subject. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of the thoughts. By comparing my work with the original, I discovered many faults and corrected them; but I sometimes had the pleasure to fancy, that, in certain particulars of small consequence, I had been fortunate enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think, that I might in time come to be a tolerable English writer; of which I was extremely ambitious.”

Franklin was always an earnest advocate of temperance, both in eating and drinking; and on this subject we prefer to let him relate his observations in his own words:

“When about sixteen years of age, I happened to meet with a book, written by one Tryon, recommending a vegetable diet. I determined to go into it. My brother, being yet unmarried, did not keep house, but boarded himself and his apprentices in another family. My refusal to eat flesh occasioned

an inconvenience, and I was frequently chid for my singularity. I made myself acquainted with Tryon's manner of preparing some of his dishes, such as boiling potatoes or rice, making hasty-pudding, and a few others, and then proposed to my brother, that if he would give me weekly half the money he paid for my board, I would board myself. He instantly agreed to it, and I presently found that I could save half what he paid me. This was an additional fund for buying of books ; but I had another advantage in it. My brother and the rest going from the printing-house to their meals, I remained there alone, and, despatching presently my light repast (which was often no more than a biscuit, or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins, or a tart from the pastry-cook's and a glass of water), had the rest of the time, till their return, for study ; in which I made the greater progress from that greater clearness of head, and quicker apprehension, which generally attend temperance in eating and drinking."

Franklin did not however adhere to the vegetable diet, being too much a thinker for himself to be the slave of any man's system in a matter of this kind ; though the cardinal virtue, temperance, he never forgot. His return to animal food he relates as follows :

“In my first voyage from Boston to Philadelphia, being becalmed off Block Island, our crew employed themselves in catching cod, and hauled up a great number. Till then, I had stuck to my resolution to eat nothing that had had life; and on this occasion I considered, according to my master Tryon, the taking every fish as a kind of unprovoked murder since none of them had, nor could do us any injury that might justify this massacre. All this seemed very reasonable. But I had been formerly a great lover of fish, and when it came out of the frying-pan it smelt admirably well. I balanced some time between principle and inclination, till recollecting that, when the fish were opened, I saw smaller fish taken out of their stomachs; then, thought I, ‘If you eat one another, I don’t see why we may not eat you.’ So I dined upon cod very heartily, and have since continued to eat as other people; returning only now and then occasionally to a vegetable diet.”

CHAPTER III.

Mr. James Franklin commences the New England Courant—Benjamin hearing the Correspondents of the Paper talk about their Pieces, is induced to try his hand—His Success—Its Effects upon him—Arbitrary Proceedings of the Assembly—Remarks—Benjamin's Unfairness to his Brother—Breaks his Agreement and leaves his Brother—Goes to New York, and thence to Philadelphia—The grotesque figure he made when he landed—Engages with Keimer—Is flattered by Gov. Keith—Visits his Father in Boston—The old gentleman declines to assist him—He returns to Philadelphia.



FRANKLIN'S apprenticeship to a printer gave him more access to books than he had before enjoyed, both by his acquaintance with other apprentices, and by the friendship of gentlemen, to whom his studious habits and correct deportment recommended him. Of these advantages he was careful to avail himself; and in the selection of books he showed a judgment and wisdom far beyond his years, reading and studying those chiefly which would repair the deficiencies in his education, which existed partly from his previous limited advantages, and partly from his negligence in improving the oppor-

tunities he had enjoyed. His brother, in 1721, commenced the publication of a newspaper, the *New England Courant*, the fourth which had appeared in America, where there are now so very many. This seemed to open a new era in our young philosopher's life.

The gentlemen who wrote for the *Courant* were in the habit of visiting the office, and conversing about the manner in which the public spoke of their communications to the paper; and these conversations were carried on in the hearing of the apprentice, without any suspicion that he listened or was interested in them. But hearing others talk of their writings, prompted young Franklin to attempt and see what he could do in the same way. As he was but a boy, and suspected that his brother would object to printing anything which he knew to be his, Benjamin disguised his handwriting, and put the paper at night under the door of the office. It was found in the morning, and laid before the gentlemen for examination and comment; and the unsuspected writer, while he stood by at his work, had the exquisite pleasure of hearing their commendation of the piece, and their guesses at the author's name. In giving their opinions as to who wrote it, Benjamin heard them mention nobody but

men of some reputation for learning and ingenuity. Of course, after such encouragement he continued to write. He kept his secret till, as he says, all his "fund of sense for such performances was exhausted." Then having, to use a familiar expression, written all he knew, he discovered himself as the author.

After this the gentlemen began to treat the young apprentice with consideration, as something more than a mere boy. His brother was not, however, altogether pleased with the turn matters had taken. He was afraid, and probably with justice, that this success might tend to make Benjamin too vain. Franklin admits that at this time commenced the difficulties between himself and his brother, which resulted in the dissolution of the connection. The circumstances under which the separation took place, embraced an act of unfairness on the part of Benjamin, which he honestly characterizes as one of the errors of his life.

His brother had printed some articles in his paper which gave offence to the Provincial government, and for one of them, by a very arbitrary mode of proceeding, the printer was imprisoned for a month. During this month Benjamin had charge of the paper, and inserted in it some articles against the

government, which, he says, his brother took very kindly, while they led others to look upon the young man in an unfavourable light, as a youth who had a turn for libelling and satire. At the end of the month his brother's discharge took place, accompanied with the arbitrary order that "James Franklin should no longer print the newspaper called the New England Courant."

This took place in 1722, or the year following. Such stretches of power, and arbitrary disregard of the rights, and infringements upon the property and liberty of citizens, were the causes which silently prepared the way for the "Declaration of Independence;" as, in a colony, it seems impossible that people should enjoy equal protection with their fellow-citizens in the mother country. Perhaps this very difficulty of his brother with the Provincial government was among the circumstances which suggested to Benjamin Franklin, the statesman, and signer of the Declaration, the arguments which he so successfully applied, with tongue and pen, against tyranny.

But whatever influence it may have had upon his public life, in his patriotic and most efficient services, it was, as we have already intimated, the occasion of an error, or rather of several, in his private life.

To evade the order that James Franklin should no longer print the *Courant*, the name of Benjamin was put upon the paper; and then, lest it should be charged that James still printed the paper by his apprentice, Benjamin's indentures were given up to him, with a discharge written upon the back, to show in case of necessity. New indentures were written for the remainder of Benjamin's time, which were to be kept private.

This scheme, it will be perceived, rested upon Benjamin's integrity. The new indentures could only bind him if he chose to comply. But a new difference arising between the brothers, Benjamin asserted his freedom, correctly supposing that James would not dare to produce the new instrument. With the cancelled agreement in his hand, therefore, he was able to set his brother at defiance. His father sided with the senior; pretty good evidence that James was now in the right, as the father had on former occasions supported Benjamin. When James found that Benjamin was resolved upon leaving him, he went to the other printers in Boston, and prevented his getting employment with any one of them; and our hero then thought of going to New York, as the nearest place where there was a printer.

One error, as Franklin honestly concedes it was, having been committed in his unfairness to his brother, others necessarily followed. He determined to leave Boston secretly; and the young man Collins managed the matter for him, inventing falsehoods to cover his retreat—falsehoods which prepare the reader for the subsequent misfortunes which befell Collins, and for the inconveniences and mistakes into which young Franklin was led, by the friendship of such an adviser.

Franklin arrived in New York in October, 1723, without money or letters, and at the inexperienced age of 17. He failed in finding employment there; but was told by Mr. William Bradford, a printer, who had moved to New York from Philadelphia, that he could probably find employment in the latter place, as the son of Mr. Bradford, who was a printer in Philadelphia, had just lost his principal hand by death. Accordingly, our young adventurer pushed for Philadelphia, going by boat to Amboy, and leaving his chest to come round by sea. He had a rough passage in the boat, being overtaken by a squall, driven out of his course, and forced to anchor near Long Island, where nobody could land on account of the surf. The boat leaked, and he passed a wet, uncomfortable night, without rest;

and the next day made a shift to reach Amboy, after being thirty hours on the water, without food, or fresh water, or any other drink than a bottle of filthy rum.

The next day, somewhat refreshed by sleep, he started on foot for Burlington, distant about fifty miles, where he expected to find boats for Philadelphia. He was three days on the road, one day drenched with rain, and every day heartily tired. He was questioned, and suspected too, from the miserable figure he made, to be a runaway, and began to wish he had never left home. When he reached Burlington he had the mortification to find that the regular boats were gone, and that there would be no more until Tuesday, the day on which he arrived at Burlington being Saturday. But toward evening a chance boat which happened to be passing took him on board. There was no wind, and they rowed until midnight, when, being uncertain where they were, and not sure that they had not passed Philadelphia, they pulled into a creek, landed and made a fire, and remained there until daylight. Then they perceived that they were a little above Philadelphia, and taking to their oars, arrived at Market Street wharf about eight o'clock on Sunday morning. This tedious journey from

New York to Philadelphia is a strong contrast to the present mode of travelling, when people are dissatisfied if they are as many hours on the road as Franklin was days. But his toilsome journey, and his not very prepossessing entrance into Philadelphia, are in yet stronger contrast with his after-life and standing there. We will let him describe his first appearance in Philadelphia in his own words :

“I have been the more particular in this description of my journey, and shall be so of my first entry into that city, that you may in your mind compare such unlikely beginnings with the figure I have since made there. I was in my working-dress, my best clothes coming round by sea. I was dirty from my being so long in the boat. My pockets were stuffed out with shirts and stockings, and I knew no one, nor where to look for lodging. Fatigued with walking, rowing, and the want of sleep, I was very hungry ; and my whole stock of cash consisted in a single dollar, and about a shilling in copper coin, which I gave to the boatmen for my passage. At first they refused it, on account of my having rowed, but I insisted on their taking it. Man is sometimes more generous when he has little money than when

he has plenty; perhaps to prevent his being thought to have but little.

“I walked towards the top of the street, gazing about till near Market Street, where I met a boy with bread. I had often made a meal of dry bread, and inquiring where he had bought it, I went immediately to the baker’s he directed me to. I asked for biscuits, meaning such as we had at Boston; that sort, it seems, was not made in Philadelphia. I then asked for a three-penny loaf, and was told they had none. Not knowing the different prices, nor the names of the different sorts of bread, I told him to give me three-penny worth of any sort. He gave me accordingly three great puffy rolls. I was surprised at the quantity, but took it, and having no room in my pockets, walked off with a roll under each arm, and eating the other. Thus I went up Market Street as far as Fourth Street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife’s father; when she, standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made, as I certainly did, a most awkward, ridiculous appearance. Then I turned and went down Chestnut Street and part of Walnut Street, eating my roll all the way, and, coming round, found myself again at Market Street wharf, near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draught of the river

water ; and, being filled with one of my rolls, gave the other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us, and were waiting to go farther.

“Thus refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean-dressed people in it, who were all walking the same way. I joined them, and thereby was led into the great meeting-house of the Quakers near the market. I sat down among them, and, after looking round a while and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy through labour and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep, and continued so till the meeting broke up, when some one was kind enough to rouse me. This, therefore, was the first house I was in, or slept in, in Philadelphia.”

On the next day, our young adventurer having made his toilet with as much neatness as the case would admit, called on Mr. Bradford, the printer. He found there the father, from New York, who had arrived at Philadelphia before him, by travelling on horseback. Mr. Bradford did not want a hand, having already supplied the loss of the deceased printer, but received Franklin very kindly, offering him a lodging and chance work, until something better should offer. Meanwhile he advised him to

apply to Keimer, another printer, who had lately commenced business. The senior Bradford accompanied Franklin immediately to Keimer's, making a show of his friendship, in order to discover Keimer's expectations as a rival to his son. The "crafty old sophister," as Franklin terms him, succeeded in his covert purpose; and Franklin also succeeded, the result of the interview being his engagement with Keimer. His new employer would not, however, permit him to lodge at Bradford's, but procured him a lodging at Mr. Read's, whose daughter has already been mentioned, as noting Franklin's singular appearance on the day of his landing. His clothing having by this time arrived, he was able to make a more respectable appearance than when first seen by the lady who was afterwards his wife.

Young Franklin was frugal and industrious in his habits, and selected his acquaintances from such as, like himself, were fond of reading, and desirous of improvement. He still, and for this he was very blameworthy, concealed his residence from his parents. His brother-in-law, Robert Holmes, now happened to hear of him, and wrote him a letter, telling him of the great grief which his parents and

other friends felt at his sudden disappearance, and earnestly entreating him to return to them.

His brother-in-law was master of a sloop that traded between Boston and Delaware, and was at Newcastle when he wrote to Benjamin and received his answer. In that answer Franklin said all that he could to excuse himself; and Mr. Holmes happening to be in company with Sir William Keith, Governor of Pennsylvania, when he received the letter, showed it to that gentleman. Sir William was surprised when he heard the age of Franklin, and said that a lad of so promising parts deserved to be encouraged.

Before Franklin had heard anything of what had occurred, Sir William called upon him at the office of Keimer, invited him to dine with him, and offered to obtain for him the public printing, both of Pennsylvania and Delaware, if he would set up in business with the consent and assistance of his father. The intention was kept a secret, and in May, 1724, Franklin returned to Boston, with a highly complimentary letter from Gov. Keith to his father. His passage occupied about a fortnight, a journey from Philadelphia to Boston being much more of an undertaking then than it now is.

He had been absent seven months. His unex-

pected appearance—for his brother, Mr. Holmes, had not yet returned, nor had he written—very much surprised his friends. All were very glad to see him, and made him welcome, except his brother. The coolness of the latter was perhaps natural, and it was increased by the behaviour of Benjamin. Philosopher though our hero was afterward, he behaved in this instance very much like a boy. Elated with his success in Philadelphia, he jingled his hard money before his brother's workmen and apprentices, took occasion to show his watch, talked largely of the fine country he lived in, and his intention to return; and wound up his visit to the printing-house, by the ridiculous parade of giving the hands a dollar to drink his health! His brother thought, and with reason, that Benjamin insulted him in this visit. These particulars we draw from Franklin's own account, who left them as a warning to lads not to suffer their good fortune to turn their heads, or induce them to conduct in a manner to belittle and render themselves contemptible.

Franklin's father seems, in everything we hear of him, to have been gifted with sound sense. He thought Sir William Keith a man of small discretion, to think of setting up a youth in business who wanted three years of reaching man's estate; and although Mr. Holmes said what he could in favour

of the project, the father declined. He wrote a civil letter to Sir William, thanking him for his proffered patronage of his son, but declined to assist him yet, as being too young to be trusted with an undertaking so important, and requiring so considerable an expenditure. The conclusion of this visit to Boston is thus related by Franklin :

“My father, though he did not approve Sir William’s proposition, was yet pleased that I had been able to obtain so advantageous a character from a person of such note where I had resided ; and that I had been so industrious and careful, as to equip myself so handsomely in so short a time ; therefore, seeing no prospect of an accommodation between my brother and me, he gave his consent to my returning again to Philadelphia, advised me to behave respectfully to the people there, endeavour to obtain the general esteem, and avoid lampooning and libelling, to which he thought I had too much inclination ; telling me, that by steady industry and prudent parsimony, I might save enough by the time I was one-and-twenty to set me up ; and that if I came near the matter he would help me out with the rest. This was all I could obtain, except some small gifts as tokens of his and my mother’s love, when I embarked again for New York ; now with their approbation and their blessing.”

CHAPTER IV.

Collins goes to Philadelphia with Franklin—The bad Habits of Collins—He becomes an Expense to Franklin—And borrows Money which the latter had no right to lend—The End of Collins—Anecdote of the young Critics—Gov. Keith sends Franklin to England—Ralph accompanies him—Franklin exchanges promises with Miss Read—Disappointment about the Letters—Mr. Denham tells Franklin Gov. Keith's Character—Franklin works at his Trade in London—His Temperate Habits.



OW we find Franklin fairly launching upon life, under much better auspices than when he first left his friends. But some difficulties and disadvantages still clung to him, growing out of the manner in which he first went away from Boston. Then, it will be remembered, he received the improper assistance of a young man. Perhaps, indeed, Franklin himself might have directed Collins what story he should tell to cover his flight, and Benjamin might have been more to blame in that matter than his friend. But, in whatever way it was done, the consequences followed him. He became a party to a wrong transaction, of which he received the supposed

benefits, and he was thus laid under an obligation to a bad boy, and was tempted and induced to do a very wrong thing in return, at his persuasion.

Collins resolved to go to Philadelphia, upon hearing Franklin's account of his new residence. He started before Franklin, going by land to Rhode Island, and leaving his books and other baggage in Boston, to come with Franklin by sea.

On his way to New York, the vessel putting in at Rhode Island, Franklin called upon his brother John, who was there settled in business. A friend of his brother's, named Vernon, gave him a demand to collect, due from a man in Pennsylvania, about thirty-five pounds; a trust which afterwards proved a source of great uneasiness to Franklin. On his arrival at New York, Benjamin's studious habits procured him the notice of another governor, a circumstance which was probably very pleasing to a poor lad, as Franklin then was. Gov. Burnet hearing that one of the passengers had a great many books with him, desired to see him; and Franklin accordingly waited upon the Governor, who entertained him with great civility. Franklin would have taken his friend Collins with him on this visit, as he had arrived at New York before him, but there was a very serious objection in the way.

Collins was not sober. Franklin found upon his reaching New York, that his friend had been intoxicated every day since his arrival. He had behaved, as drunken people usually do, in a most outrageous and unbecoming manner, and had gambled and lost all his money. Franklin was obliged to pay for his lodgings, and defray his expenses to Philadelphia; and, not only that, but to pay his board some time after his arrival in that city. Collins endeavoured to obtain employment in some counting-house, but people would not employ a dram-drinking clerk. Nor was Franklin's expenditure of his own money all. Collins knew Franklin had Vernon's money: he asked to borrow it. The young man who employs another to lie for him, cannot so well resist the liar's importunity to do a wrong by way of returning the obligation; and Collins borrowed so much of Vernon's money, that Franklin, instead of being able, like a trusty agent, to remit at once the money belonging to another, which he had collected, was for many years in trepidation, lest Vernon should call for his money, and he not be able to restore it.

The history of Collins, with which we shall now soon have done, offers a lesson as impressive, upon the dangers of dram-drinking, as Franklin's life

affords upon the good results of temperance and frugality. In Boston the two boys had been intimate from childhood. Both were fond of reading; but Collins had the more leisure, and in mathematical learning he far outstripped Franklin. While he remained a sober and industrious lad, he was much respected for his acquirements, and promised to make a good figure in life. But drinking ruined all. He continued to drink while in Philadelphia, and was unable to find employment there. He had frequent differences and quarrels with his friend Franklin; for those who permit their reason to be dethroned by a passion for drink, quarrel with their best friends, and treat those worst to whom they are under the deepest obligations. At length the two friends could hardly be called friends any longer, scarcely exchanging a civil word together. Collins went to Barbadoes, as preceptor for the sons of a gentleman there, promising to remit to Franklin what he owed him, out of the first money he should receive; but Franklin never heard of him afterward, and of course never received his money.

We have mentioned that Franklin selected boys fond of reading, like himself, for his acquaintances in Philadelphia; and we shall here introduce a little anecdote, to show young people how much they

may be deceived by their friendships or their dislikes, in judging of the abilities of their companions. Franklin's chief acquaintances were named Charles Osborne, James Ralph, and Joseph Watson. Osborne and Ralph were fond of poetry, and had begun to try their hands in little pieces. Osborne was sensible, candid, and frank, affectionate to his friends, but in literary matters too fond of criticism.

“Ralph was inclined to give himself up entirely to poetry, not doubting that he might make great proficiency in it, and even make his fortune by it. He pretended that the greatest poets must, when they first began to write, have committed as many faults as he did. Osborne endeavoured to dissuade him, assured him he had no genius for poetry, and advised him to think of nothing beyond the business he was bred to; that, in the mercantile way, though he had no stock, he might by his diligence and punctuality recommend himself to employment as a factor, and in time acquire wherewith to trade on his own account. I approved for my part the amusing one's self with poetry now and then, so far as to improve one's language, but no farther.

“On this it was proposed, that we should each of us at our next meeting produce a piece of our own composing, in order to improve by our mutual ob-

servations, criticisms, and corrections. As language and expression were what we had in view, we excluded all considerations of invention, by agreeing that the task should be a version of the eighteenth Psalm, which describes the descent of a Deity. When the time of our meeting drew nigh, Ralph called on me first, and let me know his piece was ready. I told him I had been busy, and having little inclination, had done nothing. He then showed me his piece for my opinion, and I much approved it, as it appeared to me to have great merit. ‘Now,’ said he, ‘Osborne never will allow the least merit in anything of mine, but makes a thousand criticisms out of mere envy. He is not so jealous of you; I wish, therefore, you would take this piece and produce it as yours; I will pretend not to have had time, and so produce nothing. We shall then hear what he will say to it.’ It was agreed, and I immediately transcribed it, that it might appear in my own hand.

“We met; Watson’s performance was read; there were some beauties in it, but many defects. Osborne’s was read; it was much better; Ralph did it justice; remarked some faults, but applauded the beauties. He himself had nothing to produce. I was backward, seemed desirous of being excused,

had not had sufficient time to correct, &c.; but no excuse could be admitted, produce I must. It was read and repeated; Watson and Osborne gave up the contest, and joined in applauding it. Ralph only made some criticisms, and proposed some amendments; but I defended my text. Osborne was severe against Ralph, and told me he was no better able to criticise than compose verses. As these two were returning home, Osborne expressed himself still more strongly in favour of what he thought my production; having before refrained, as he said, lest I should think he meant to flatter me. 'But who would have imagined,' said he, 'that Franklin was capable of such a performance; such painting, such force, such fire! He has even improved on the original. In common conversation he seems to have no choice of words; he hesitates and blunders—yet how wonderfully well he writes!' When we next met Ralph confessed the trick we had played, and Osborne was laughed at."

To return to the thread of the narrative, the violation of trust which Franklin committed was, he himself remarks, pretty good evidence that he was not yet old enough to be competent to manage business. His father's suspicions relative to Gov. Keith were equally well founded; and if

Benjamin had consulted others who knew Keith better, or if he had used a tithe of his own discretion, he might have escaped much difficulty and serious embarrassment. It is a good rule for young men always to doubt the wisdom, or sincerity, or both, of those who would persuade them to disregard the instructions and admonitions of their parents. By slighting this, Benjamin was the victim of the deception of Gov. Keith—for we can call it no less; and with what account of the transaction is preserved to us, it is hard to see what could have been the man's purpose in deceiving a poor boy.

Gov. Keith told him that his father was *too* prudent; "but," said he, "since he will not set you up, I will do it myself." At his direction, Franklin prepared an inventory of such things as were necessary for a printing-office, in value about one hundred pounds. Then the Governor inquired if he could not purchase them better on the spot; and as all such things were at that time imported from England, he directed Franklin to get himself ready to go out in the ship, which at that time passed once a year between London and Philadelphia, and was the only vessel which regularly made the voyage. During the several months which intervened between that time and the sailing of the vessel, Franklin

kept steadily at work, "fretting extremely" all the time, about the money which belonged to Mr. Vernon, which he had loaned to Collins, and which the latter, as we have already told the reader, not only never paid, but never mentioned to his friend again.

Gov. Keith continued his attentions to young Franklin, asking him often to his house, and always talking about setting him up in Philadelphia, as a settled thing. The Governor promised him letters of introduction to several persons in London, and letters of credit, with which he should purchase types, paper, &c.; and from time to time named days on which he was to call and receive these documents, but when he called they were never ready. Thus things were delayed till the vessel was ready to sail, and when Franklin called for his letters, he was told that the Governor was exceedingly busy, but that he would be at Newcastle before the vessel arrived there on her way down the Delaware, and would hand him the letters at that place.

Franklin took leave of his friends, including Miss Read, to whom he was then paying attention with a view to future marriage, and with whom he "exchanged promises," and went on board. Ralph accompanied him, having given out that he was going to London to establish a correspondence, and

obtain goods to sell on commission. At Newcastle the Governor was again too busy to see Franklin, but sent him a message of "great regret" that he was so much engaged that he could not meet him. He promised to send the letters on board, and heartily wished him a good voyage and a speedy return.

Among the passengers was Mr. Denham, a merchant, and a member of the Society of Friends, who contracted a friendship for Franklin, which continued during his life, and which was of almost immediate assistance and benefit to our young adventurer, and served to prevent the ill consequences of his exposure to temptations and bad advice. When the vessel neared her destination, the captain permitted Franklin to take from the ship's bag such letters as were addressed to his care. He called upon a stationer in London, to whom one of the letters was addressed, and delivered it as a letter from Gov. Keith. The stationer said he did not know such a person; but opening the letter, continued: "Oh! this is from Riddlesden! I have lately found out that he is a complete rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any letters from him!" And handing the letter back to Franklin, he turned away to serve a customer.

In this dilemma Franklin went to his good friend Denham for advice. Neither of them required to be told that Riddlesden, who was an attorney in Philadelphia, was a knave; and Franklin was very much surprised to find that the letters which he had selected from the bag were not written by Gov. Keith. He told all the circumstances to Mr. Denham, who informed him that there was not the slightest probability that the Governor had written any letters for him, and that no one who knew Gov. Keith placed the least dependence on him. He laughed at the idea of a man's writing letters of credit, who had no credit to give. And thus was our hero brought into difficulty by over-caution in concealing his purposes, and over-confidence in himself. Almost any man in Philadelphia could have given Franklin the same knowledge of Gov. Keith, which he obtained not till he had crossed the Atlantic upon his faithless promises. Franklin, in his account of the matter, is very lenient to Gov. Keith, and attributes his treacherous promises to a desire to please every body. Having little to give, he gave expectations.

Mr. Denham recommended Franklin, in his difficulty, to endeavour to improve himself in his business by prosecuting his trade in London. In

pursuance of this advice he obtained employment at Palmer's, and afterward at Watts', two of the principal printing-houses, or offices, then in London. We copy his own account of his manner of life as printer there. The office, it will be noted, is called a *chapel*. This was the custom then, and it may be in England still, and is said to have arisen from the circumstance, that the first printing was done in England in an old chapel. The *bien venu*, welcome, or *footing*, as it is more usually called, formerly paid in drink upon the entrance of a new hand, has long been discontinued, as it should be. It was truly one of those customs which are more honoured "in the breach than in the observance." The term "*St. Monday*," which our young readers may not all comprehend, or "making a *St. Monday*," signified giving up the first part of the week to idleness and dissipation—a habit into which Franklin could never fall; and his example in this respect, as well as in many others, has accomplished a vast deal of good in the world.

"At my first admission into the printing-house, I took to working at press, imagining I felt a want of the bodily exercise I had been used to in America, where press-work is mixed with the composing. I drank only water; the other workmen, near fifty

in number, were great drinkers of beer. On occasion I carried up and down stairs a large form of types in each hand, when others carried but one in both hands. They wondered to see, from this and several instances, that the *Water-American*, as they called me, was *stronger* than themselves, who drank *strong* beer! We had an alehouse boy, who attended always in the house to supply the workmen. My companion at the press drank every day a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast with his bread and cheese, a pint between breakfast and dinner; a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work. I thought it a detestable custom; but it was necessary, he supposed, to drink *strong* beer, that he might be *strong* to labour. I undeavoured to convince him, that the bodily strength afforded by beer could only be in proportion to the grain or flour of the barley dissolved in the water of which it was made; that there was more flour in a pennyworth of bread; and therefore, if he could eat that with a pint of water, it would give him more strength than a quart of beer. He drank on, however, and had four or five shillings to pay out of his wages every Saturday night for that vile liquor; an ex-

pense I was free from. And thus these poor fellows keep themselves always under.

“Watts, after some weeks, desiring to have me in the composing-room, I left the pressmen; a new *bien venu* for drink, being five shillings, was demanded of me by the compositors. I thought it an imposition, as I had paid one to the pressmen; the master thought so too, and forbade my paying it. I stood out two or three weeks, was accordingly considered as an excommunicate, and had so many little pieces of private malice practised on me, by mixing my sorts, transposing and breaking my matter, &c. &c., if ever I stepped out of the room; and all ascribed to the *chapel ghost*, which they said ever haunted those not regularly admitted; that, notwithstanding the master’s protection, I found myself obliged to comply and pay the money; convinced of the folly of being on ill terms with those one is to live with continually.

“I was now on a fair footing with them, and soon acquired considerable influence. I proposed some reasonable alterations in their *chapel* laws, and carried them against all opposition. From my example, a great many of them left their muddling breakfast of beer, bread, and cheese, finding they could with

me be supplied from a neighbouring house, with a large porringer of hot water-gruel, sprinkled with pepper, crumbled with bread, and a bit of butter in it, for the price of a pint of beer, viz. three halfpence. This was a more comfortable as well as a cheaper breakfast, and kept their heads clearer. Those who continued sopping with their beer all day, were often, by not paying, out of credit at the ale-house, and used to make interest with me to get beer; their *light*, as they phrased it, *being out*. I watched the pay-table on Saturday night, and collected what I stood engaged for them, having to pay sometimes near thirty shillings a week on their accounts. This, and my being esteemed a pretty good *riggite*, that is, a jocular verbal satirist, supported my consequence in the society. My constant attendance (I never making a *St. Monday*) recommended me to the master; and my uncommon quickness at composing occasioned my being put upon work of despatch, which was generally better paid. So I went on now very agreeably."

CHAPTER V.

Ralph's Character developed—Remarks—Franklin's Good Conduct secures him Friends—Engages with Mr. Denham as Clerk—Returns to America—Anecdote of Mr. Denham—His Death—Franklin resumes his Trade—Keimer's Craftiness—Franklin's Industry and Usefulness—Keimer grows captious and drives him away—Franklin forms a Copartnership with Meredith—Re-engages for a time with Keimer—Goes to Burlington to print Money for New Jersey—The Story of the Roast Pig—Franklin and Meredith commence business—The First Fruits—The Croaker.



S Franklin's success in Philadelphia was clogged at first by the dead weight of Collins, so in London his friend Ralph proved a sad stumbling-block and hindrance. After they had established themselves together in a lodging-house, Ralph communicated to his friend his views and intentions; and that he purposed to remain in London, and desert his wife and child, leaving them to be taken care of by her friends in America. This circumstance should have been enough, of itself, to have led Franklin to select another and more worthy associate. Ralph had no money, and while he was in idleness continued

to borrow of Franklin from time to time, till he had taken seven-and-twenty pounds, equal to about a hundred and thirty dollars of our present currency, and to much more in those days, when money, obtained by artizans with more difficulty, was more valuable.

We need scarcely tell the sagacious reader that Ralph never paid what he had borrowed. A man who would desert his wife, and deceive her and his friends with false pretexts, would never want an excuse to evade the payment of an honest debt. During nearly the whole eighteen months that Franklin was in London, Ralph kept him poor, and unable to pay the expenses of his passage back to Philadelphia. Ralph entirely forgot his wife and child, and Franklin also forgot Miss Read, to whom his word was plighted. He wrote but one letter to her while in London, and that to tell her that he should not soon return. But a difficulty arose at last between the two friends, which resulted in Ralph's telling Franklin that he considered all the obligations under which he stood to him annulled. As it respected the past this was of less consequence, as Ralph was utterly unable to pay what he owed. So far as the future was concerned, the rupture of the friendship relieved Franklin from a

heavy burthen. The disadvantages which Franklin incurred by the friendship of the two persons with whom he was most intimate in his youth, show the value of advice to the young. If even Franklin could not escape danger, with his early sagacity ; and if all his strength of character was required to save him from shipwreck, it is a most impressive warning to others. Few in his situation would escape at all, fewer still could rise like him to virtue and distinction, in spite of circumstances so adverse to both.

As we have before remarked, Franklin possessed next to none of the advantages and facilities, which render the acquisition of knowledge so easy in our day. But his active mind perceived how the best might be made of the circumstances in which he was placed ; and his industry and perseverance accomplished wonders. He saw the need and utility of many changes and improvements, and, as we shall find by and by, he laid the foundation for many public libraries and other institutions, in the benefit of which all classes of our fellow-citizens participate. Circulating libraries were not in use a hundred years ago ; but Franklin saw the utility of such a mode of obtaining books, and he made an arrangement with a bookseller, who had an immense

collection of second-hand books, by which he obtained the use of such as he wanted, upon terms similar to those now made by circulating libraries.

Franklin's acquirements and character, though his situation in life was humble, particularly in England, where rank makes such immense differences between men, procured him the notice and friendship of many among the learned and the great. Many years afterward, when he visited that country, as the delegate and representative of his fellow-citizens in America, these persons remembered in the statesman, the lad whom they had encouraged and befriended. By his good character as a youth he provided and established an introduction as a man; being received in England rather as an old acquaintance than as a stranger. Thus we see how important to the man is a good memory of the conduct of the boy.

At length Franklin prepared to return to America. His good friend, Mr. Denham, who had watched his course in London, having dissuaded him from a wild plan which he had formed of wandering all over Europe, proposed to him to return as his clerk, in a large store which he was about to open in Philadelphia. To this Franklin acceded, and took leave of printing, as he then fancied, for ever.

On his arrival in Philadelphia, he found that several changes had taken place. Keith was no longer Governor, having been superseded. Franklin met him in the street, and the ex-Governor passed him without speaking, seeming a little ashamed. Miss Read, at the persuasion of her friends, had married in his absence, his silence having taken away the strongest reason she could have urged for declining the match which they made for her. Keimer seemed to have prospered, having moved into a better house, and obtained an abundance of new type, with which he appeared to be doing a very good business.

Mr. Denham opened his store, and everything now seemed to promise well for our hero. They lodged and boarded together; Mr. Denham treated Franklin as if he had been a son, and the young man respected and loved his employer. An anecdote which Franklin relates of him, serves to show his character in the best light, as a man of sterling probity and honour. He was once in business in England, where he was unfortunate, failed in debt to a great number of people, compounded, or settled with them, obtaining a legal release from all his indebtedness, and came to America. Here he was very successful as a merchant, and acquired a large

fortune. He returned to England, it will be recollected, in the same ship with Franklin. He invited his old creditors to an entertainment, at which he took occasion to express his gratitude to them for the very easy terms upon which they had released him from his obligations. His guests, of course, thought the entertainment was all they were to receive, but when their plates were changed, each found on the table a cheque on a banker for the remainder, morally if not legally due him, with interest.

None could know better than Franklin how to appreciate and respect such a character as Mr. Denham's, and a long course of happiness and prosperity was before him. Mr. Denham had promised, that as soon as his clerk should be sufficiently acquainted with mercantile business, he would send him with a cargo of bread and flour to the West Indies, and procure him profitable commissions from others; and that if he managed these trusts well, he would establish him handsomely. After his experience with Collins, Keith, and Ralph, Franklin had learned that the promises of a man who was their good opposite in all particulars, were worthy of trust, and safely to be relied upon. Of course, when we speak of human promises as safe, we must ex-

cept them from the influence of such contingencies as are above man's control. Such an event occurred in the death of his kind friend. Franklin was taken sick at the same time, and came also very near dying. When he recovered he found himself once more unfixed in the world, without employment, for the store was taken in charge by the executors. Mr. Denham left him a small legacy as a token of his kindness; the first direct assistance, above his absolute earnings, which Franklin had ever received.

He was now (1727) in his twenty-second year. He wished to obtain employment as a clerk, but was not successful. His brother-in-law, Mr. Holmes, who was now in Philadelphia, advised him to return to his business, that of a printer. Franklin had now profited by experience, and strove to avoid connection with the unworthy. His previous knowledge of Keimer, and the bad character he had heard of him from his deserted wife, and her friends in London, disinclined Franklin from having anything more to do with him; but as he made large offers, and no other opening presented, Franklin closed again with his former master.

He soon discovered that Keimer's motive for engaging him at high wages was, to instruct a set of raw, cheap hands, collected together at low wages,

and articulated or bound to Keimer; and that, as soon as these hands were instructed, Keimer would be ready to discharge his foreman. As he had agreed to take the management of Keimer's office, however, he did not permit his knowledge of his employer's character and intentions to prevent him from doing his own duty. He went cheerfully to work to put the office, which was in sad confusion, in order, and brought his hands to know their business and do it better. Nor did he confine himself, as many in his situation might have done, to doing barely what could be required of him, and that unwillingly. He gave the benefit of all his knowledge and experience to his employer, working as zealously as if he had been engaged for himself, which is the true mode of all service. The printing-office frequently wanted what printers call *sorts*; that is to say, some letters of the alphabet would be deficient. There was then no type-foundry in America, by which these deficiencies could be supplied; and Franklin, who had seen types cast in London, and who never permitted an opportunity to learn to pass unimproved, or forgot what he had acquired, contrived a way to supply what was wanted. He also engraved, when there was need, made the ink, improved the apparatus in various ways, was ware-

houseman, and in short, became quite a *factotum*, or doer of all things.

As Franklin had expected, when the raw hands were in some degree made useful, Keimer grew less civil. He put on the airs of a master, was captious and fault-finding, complained of the wages he paid as too high, and evidently sought an occasion of quarrel. Franklin knew that Keimer, through slothful inattention to business, selling often without profit, and trusting without keeping accounts, was embarrassed. He attributed his petulance partly to this cause, and bore the inconveniences of his situation with as much patience as he could. Things, meanwhile, went on from bad to worse, until one day Keimer publicly insulted him before the neighbours, calling to him in the office from the street; and then, coming into the house, he continued the quarrel before the hands, which was a very irritating circumstance. High words passed upon both sides. The conversation closed, by Keimer's giving the quarter's notice which their agreement required, and expressing regret that so long a time was necessary. Franklin waived the privilege he had of remaining three months, and left the office instantly, purposing to return to Boston.

And now we come to one of the pleasant proofs

of the benefits of temperance, and the advantages of exerting a good example and a good influence. Among the hands in Keimer's office was a young man named Meredith, a native of Pennsylvania, who had been sadly addicted to dram-drinking, but had been persuaded by Franklin to discontinue a habit so vile and ruinous. This young man's time with Keimer would soon expire, and he urged Franklin to wait in Philadelphia, and go into business; Meredith furnishing the capital as an offset to Franklin's skill and experience. Meredith's father endorsed the proposal, highly pleased at the thought of his son's connection with an estimable young man like Franklin, and hoping that by becoming a partner with such a person, his son would be cured of his bad habits entirely. Franklin endeavoured, while Meredith's engagement with Keimer continued, to find employment in the other office, but without success. Perhaps some of our readers may begin to think that Franklin's faithful service with Keimer, was time and labour thrown away unrequited. But his good conduct there gave him a high character with Meredith's father, which was an immediate benefit; and it aided in establishing the good character in Philadelphia which lasted him all his life.

Nor was this all. If Franklin had given his master niggardly service, exacting all that was due him, and performing as little in return as possible, Keimer, after he was gone, might have never thought more of him, except to be glad that he had got rid of a troublesome fellow. Instead of that, such was Franklin's ingenuity and usefulness, that he found he could not very well do without him. The Province of New Jersey wanted to procure the printing of some paper money. Keimer knew that Franklin was the only man in that part of the country who could supply the necessary types, cuts, &c.; and fearful that Bradford, the other printer, would engage Franklin, and get the work, he sent him a very civil message, telling him that old friends should not part for a few words, the effect of sudden passion, and asking him to return. Meredith added his persuasions; Franklin complied, and Keimer obtained the work, which Franklin executed for him.

Keimer and Franklin went to Burlington to print the bills. As a committee of some of the principal men in the Province had been appointed to watch the execution of the work, which occupied about three months, Franklin had here an opportunity to make acquaintances, which proved very useful to him afterward. The inferiority of the master to

the man was apparent. Franklin contrived a copper-plate press for the work, the first that had been seen in the country, and several ornaments and checks for the bills. His mind had been improved by reading and observation, and his conversation was therefore prized. He was introduced at the houses of the committee and their friends, while the master was neglected. Keimer was an odd, and not very agreeable man, ignorant of the common courtesies of life, fond of rudely opposing received opinions, and slovenly to extreme dirtiness.

Keimer wore his beard at full length, because that, in the Mosaic law, it is said, "Thou shalt not mar the corners of thy beard." He likewise kept the seventh day Sabbath, and both these points were essential with him. He wished very much to bring Franklin over to his opinions, and an amusing anecdote is related of their early acquaintance. Franklin waggishly consented to agree to keep his rule about the beard and the Sabbath, if Keimer would consent to give up animal food. Franklin thus describes the result:

"He was usually a great eater, and I wished to give myself some diversion in half-starving him. He consented to try the practice if I would keep him company. I did so, and we held it for three

months. Our provisions were purchased, cooked, and brought to us regularly by a woman in the neighbourhood, who had from me a list of forty dishes, which she prepared for us at different times, in which there entered neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. This whim suited me the better at this time from the cheapness of it, not costing us above eighteen pence sterling each per week. I have since kept several lents most strictly, leaving the common diet for that, and that for the common, abruptly, without the least inconvenience. So that I think there is little in the advice of making those changes by easy gradations. I went on pleasantly, but poor Keimer suffered grievously, grew tired of the project, longed for the fleshpots of Egypt, and ordered a roast pig. He invited me and two women friends to dine with him; but, it being brought too soon upon the table, he could not resist the temptation, and ate the whole before we came."

Soon after the Burlington job was completed, the new types and press arrived from London. Franklin and Meredith settled with Keimer and left him, and commenced business on their own account. Just as they had put things in order, and expended their last cash, a friend of Franklin's brought in a countryman, whom he had met in the street inquir-

ing for a printer. The five shillings received for this job, coming so seasonably, and being the first fruits, gave Franklin more pleasure than any crown which he afterward earned; and the gratitude he felt to the friend who introduced his first customer, made him in after life the more ready to assist young beginners. To offset this and other pleasant circumstances at the commencement, Franklin relates the following anecdote, which is as good now, as it was then:

“There are croakers in every country, always boding its ruin. Such a one there lived in Philadelphia; a person of note, an elderly man, with a wise look and a very grave manner of speaking; his name was Samuel Mickle. This gentleman, a stranger to me, stopped me one day at my door, and asked if I was the young man who had lately opened a new printing-house? Being answered in the affirmative, he said he was sorry for me, because it was an expensive undertaking, and the expense would be lost; for Philadelphia was a sinking place, the people already half bankrupts, or near being so; all the appearances of the contrary, such as new buildings and the rise of rents, being to his certain knowledge fallacious; for they were in fact among the things that would ruin us. Then he gave me

such a detail of misfortunes now existing, or that were soon to exist, that he left me melancholy. Had I known him before I engaged in this business, probably I never should have done it. This person continued to live in this decaying place, and to declaim in the same strain, refusing for many years to buy a house there, because all was going to destruction; and at last I had the pleasure of seeing him give five times as much for one as he might have bought it for when he first began croaking."

CHAPTER VI.

Franklin's Early Temptations—The Junto—Assistance of Franklin by its Members—Unpalatable *pi*—Franklin's Newspaper—His Ability and Independence—The Sawdust Pudding—Difficulties—Franklin buys out his Partner—His Safe Mode of Business and Living—Its Effects—Consequences of a Rival's opposite Mode—Franklin's Thoughts turn to Matrimony—Marries Miss Read—Anecdote of the China Bowl and Silver Spoon:



E have followed Franklin through his boyhood and minority, which the attentive reader cannot fail to have observed, were seasons to him of peculiar temptation and exposure. If he did not always do exactly right, his faults were not deliberate ones, nor were they persisted in when he discovered them; and he passed with safety through his juvenile trials, not the least of which was the influence which he possessed over his companions. He says:

"The kind hand of Providence preserved me through this dangerous time of youth, and the hazardous situations I was sometimes in among strangers, remote from the eye and advice of my

father, free from any *wilful* gross immorality or injustice. * * * I had therefore a tolerable character to begin the world with; I valued it properly, and determined to preserve it."

Franklin's literary tastes, and desire for knowledge and improvement, now came in as an assistance, in a way which he probably had not counted upon. Just before commencing business, he had formed among his acquaintances a club for mutual improvement. Its members included tradesmen, artificers, merchants, and professional men, the requisites to admission being mind and character. It met once a week, and lasted almost forty years. Franklin says of it, that it was the best school of philosophy, morality, and politics, that then existed in the Province. The topics for discussion were announced during the week preceding that in which the debate took place, and the members were thus induced to read, in order to prepare themselves to speak to the purpose. They acquired good and courteous habits of conversation, as the rules studied the exclusion of everything by which the members would offend each other. This characteristic of the *Junto*, as this club was called, tended to its long continuance; and the absence of such regulations, or a neglect of their enforcement, may be one

reason why modern "debating societies" are so short-lived.

The members of the Junto, now that two of their number were in business as printers, all exerted themselves to recommend them to their friends, and procure them employment. But the obtaining of work is not enough, unless it is carefully and promptly done. Our two young printers took care no delay or inaccuracy should belie their friends' recommendations, but laboured early and late. On one occasion, Franklin relates that when he fancied his day's work was done, two pages were accidentally thrown into *pi*, as the printers call type, when mixed and knocked into confusion. This was a most annoying and disheartening business, as type thus disarranged required a great deal of patient labour to put in the proper order; and when that is done, the whole work of "setting it up" and correcting still remains to do. But Franklin instantly set to work, and fully repaired the mischief before he went to bed. The new firm became a proverb for industry. Merchants noticed them at work late at night and early in the morning, and offers of credit for stationery were made to them without solicitation. These they cautiously declined for the

present to accept ; and care not to abuse their credit was another cause of their success.

Franklin now conceived the intention of establishing a second newspaper in Philadelphia, there being then (1729) only one, that printed by Bradford. Keimer got wind of it, and anticipated him by establishing one himself. Franklin and Meredith delayed their enterprise, and in about three months Keimer got tired of the speculation, having obtained only about ninety subscribers, and sold out to Franklin and Meredith for a trifle. They made an immediate improvement ; printing the paper better, and on better type, and producing a handsomer sheet than had been before seen in the Province.

Besides its claims upon the public approval, for its handsome and correct printing, Franklin's paper, which was called the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, was ably conducted. Now the labour which Franklin had bestowed upon English composition became valuable to him. Whatever subject he treated was clearly and ably handled ; and the knowledge which he had acquired by reading and observation, enabled him to take hold of prominent political, scientific, and other questions, and give opinions and comments upon them, which had both weight and inte-

rest. The leading men in the Province were among his subscribers; and the acquaintances he had made, and the friends he had secured, became his readers themselves, and recommended him to others. His list of subscribers rapidly increased; and instead of being made idle or negligent by success, he redoubled his diligence. The ingenuity with which he could contrive and construct articles necessary in his business—an ingenuity which he had increased in the service of others—was now of the highest use to himself.

In managing his paper, he aimed to be just and fearless. We find in the anecdotes related of this part of his life, one which is both amusing and characteristic: Soon after the establishment of his newspaper, he found occasion to remark with some degree of freedom on the public conduct of one or two persons of high standing in Philadelphia. This course was disapproved by some of his patrons, who sought an opportunity to convey to him their views of the subject, and what they represented to be the opinion of his friends. He listened patiently, and replied by requesting that they would favour him with their company at supper, and bring with them the other gentlemen who had expressed dissatisfaction. The time arrived, and the guests as-

sembled. He received them cordially, and listened again to their friendly reproofs of his editorial conduct. At length supper was announced; but when the guests had seated themselves around the table, they were surprised to see nothing before them but two puddings, made of coarse meal, called *sawdust puddings* in the common phrase, and a stone pitcher filled with water. He helped them all, and then applied himself to his own plate, partaking freely of the repast, and urging his friends to do the same. They taxed their politeness to the utmost, but all in vain; their appetites refused obedience to the will. Perceiving their difficulty, Franklin at last arose and said, "*My friends, any one who can subsist upon sawdust pudding and water, as I can, needs no man's patronage.*"

About this time, Mr. Vernon, whose money he had received so many years before, but had hitherto been unable to repay, while it furnished an ever-recurring subject of annoyance, wrote to remind him of the debt. Franklin replied in a frank and ingenuous letter, acknowledging his remissness and stating the cause. He mentioned his present circumstances, and asked a still longer time, which Mr. Vernon allowed him. As soon as Franklin was able, he paid the debt with interest; and many years

afterward, when he was in France, as Minister from the United States, he still further manifested his sense of gratitude, by rendering important services to a young man who was a grandson of Mr. Vernon.

And now came a new difficulty. Meredith, Franklin's associate, left nearly the whole business upon his partner's hands. He was a poor pressman, and could hardly set types at all; and, to make a bad matter worse, notwithstanding all Franklin's efforts for his amendment, was seldom perfectly sober. Nor had his father been able to comply with the stipulations under which the partnership was formed. One hundred pounds only had been paid. Another hundred becoming due, the merchant grew impatient and sued for his money. Bail was given; but if the residue of the money was not forthcoming in time, the materials would have to be sold to satisfy the debt, and all the flattering prospects of the young firm would be crushed in the bud.

It may seem strange that Franklin's character could not obtain more indulgence from his creditor; but there was a sad disadvantage in his way. Meredith, his partner, was often seen intoxicated in the street, playing low games of chance in the ale-houses, and doing other things, not only to his own discredit, but to the injury of the character and

credit of the firm. In this dilemma, two true friends, Robert Grace and William Coleman, both members of the Junto, came to Franklin separately, and without the knowledge of each other. Each offered to advance the sum necessary to relieve him from his difficulties, provided he would dissolve with Meredith, and take the whole business into his own hands. Franklin, honourable even to those who injured him, answered, that he could not think of proposing a dissolution to the Merediths while there was any hope that they would fulfil their agreement; but told his friends that if opportunity offered, he would avail himself of their kindness.

Meredith at length relieved him from the dilemma, by proposing to leave the firm. He said that he was sensible he was unfit for the business; that his father had been disappointed, and was unable to fulfil his agreement, and proposed to relinquish his share of the concern, if Franklin would assume its debts, return his father the one hundred pounds he had advanced, and give him thirty pounds and a new saddle. With this offer Franklin, by the assistance of his friends, closed at once. Meredith used his new saddle to ride upon to South Carolina, where with a party of his friends he settled; and

Franklin was left in possession of the newspaper and the business.

This was in the summer of 1730; and Franklin may be said from this day ever afterward to have gone on prosperously. One by one he repaired the great errors of his youth, as he himself terms them; and his frugality and industry, now unclogged by the faults of an indifferent partner, speedily showed their effects. His ability to write continued to be of the most essential service to him. He wrote a pamphlet on "The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency," which it was thought favourably influenced the action of the Assembly, in procuring an act authorizing such an emission; and his friends in the House gave him the printing, which was a profitable job, and a great help to him. A friend also procured him the public printing of the Province of Delaware. He now opened a small stationer's shop, and offered in it legal blanks of all kinds, the most correct and neat that had ever been exposed for sale in Philadelphia. He was soon able to commence paying off the debt which he had incurred in buying the printing-office. He endeavoured not only to be really industrious and frugal, but to avoid everything which had an appearance of idleness and dissipation. He dressed plainly, was never

seen at places of idle diversion, wasted no time in hunting and fishing, and was not above trundling his purchases of stock for his store home on a wheelbarrow, when it was convenient or necessary. His favourite source of recreation, books, instructed as well as amused him; and while reading did not expose him to the public charge of idleness, he took care that it did not really interfere with his industry, and was careful to be punctual in keeping his engagements. In this manner, winning and keeping public confidence, he went on thriving daily.

While the good effects of Franklin's course were thus visible, the bad effects of an opposite mode of management were exhibited in another case. Keimer's business and credit daily declined, and at last he was forced to sell his office to satisfy his creditors. One of his apprentices, David Harry, bought the stock, and set up the business. Franklin dreaded Harry as a rival, as he had many powerful friends, and therefore proposed a partnership. This, Harry, fortunately for Franklin, declined with some scorn. But his mode of doing business was different from Franklin's. He dressed and lived extravagantly, was fond of public diversion and idle amusement, ran in debt, and neglected his business, until business neglected him; and then finding nothing to do,

packed up his printing-office, and followed Keimer with it to Barbadoes, where at length he made a total failure, and came back to Pennsylvania without a penny.

Franklin's thoughts—he was now five-and-twenty years old—began to be turned toward marriage. The failure of Keimer, and that of Harry, one after the other, broke off a rather mercenary arrangement, which the friends of a certain young woman had made to marry her to him, as they reasoned that the printing business was not a profitable one; and this, with his disappointment in other directions, was a most fortunate circumstance for our hero, for it brought about a better match for him, and one which was the cause of much of his happiness in his after-life. Miss Read, to whom he was pledged while yet in his teens, was married, as the reader remembers, while Franklin was living in London, in neglect of his duty to her. But that marriage proved a most unfortunate one, and the husband a worthless and miserable fellow, who had already one wife living in England. Miss Read was soon taken from him by her friends, and did not even bear his name. He ran in debt, and then, a race which soon follows the other, ran away and died in the West Indies.

A friendly relation, notwithstanding the unfortunate love affair, had always existed between Franklin and the Reads, since he boarded there. He was frequently invited to the house, and consulted in their affairs, and was able sometimes to be of service. He pitied Miss Read's unfortunate situation. She was generally dejected, seldom cheerful, and avoided company. He considered his own giddiness and inconstancy while in London, as in a great degree the cause of Miss Read's unhappiness; though the mother insisted that the fault was more her's than Franklin's, as she prevented her marriage to Franklin before he went abroad, and induced the marriage with another in his absence. Their mutual affection was revived, and Franklin took her to wife on the first day of September, 1730. Of the manner in which Franklin commenced housekeeping the reader will judge from the following account, written by himself:

“We have an English proverb that says, ‘*He that would thrive, must ask his wife.*’ It was lucky for me that I had one as much disposed to industry and frugality as myself. She assisted me cheerfully in my business, folding and stitching pamphlets, tending shop, purchasing old linen rags for the paper-makers, &c. We kept no idle servants, our

table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was for a long time bread and milk (no tea), and I ate it out of a two-penny earthen porringer, with a pewter spoon. But mark how luxury will enter families, and make a progress in spite of principle; being called one morning to breakfast, I found it in a China bowl, with a spoon of silver! They had been bought for me without my knowledge by my wife, and had cost her the enormous sum of three-and-twenty shillings; for which she had no other excuse or apology to make, but that she thought *her* husband deserved a silver spoon and China bowl as well as any of his neighbours. This was the first appearance of plate and China in our house; which afterwards, in a course of years, as our wealth increased, augmented gradually to several hundred pounds in value."

CHAPTER VII.

Franklin's Statue—Philadelphia Library Company—Standing before Kings—Scheme of Moral Perfection—Scheme of Order—The Speckled Axe—Cause of Franklin's Success in Life—Poor Richard's Almanac—Commences the Study of Languages at the age of twenty-seven—Visits his Relations—His Public Life commences—Various Institutions and Enterprises under his auspices—Electrical Experiments—He draws Electricity from the Clouds.



ON South Fifth Street, at the corner of Library, many of our readers have often noticed a venerable-looking building, with a niche in its front, in which stands a statue of Franklin. It was placed there in 1792, by the munificence of William Bingham, Esq., a citizen of Philadelphia; and was the first piece of sculpture of so large a size which had been seen in America. The Sage is represented standing, with his right arm resting upon a pile of books, and holding in his right hand an *inverted* sceptre, indicating his anti-monarchical and republican principles. In his left hand is a scroll. The statue is draped with a Roman toga, which the utilitarian philosopher would doubtless have denounced as a worse

than superfluous ornament; but in spite of it the resemblance is correct. The head is a copy of the excellent bust by Houdon. This piece of statuary was executed in Italy by Francis Lazzarini. Under the encouragement which art and genius receive, from a people living under the blessings of the free institutions which Franklin aided to establish, America has since produced some of the best modern sculptors and painters.

The building in front of which this statue is placed, is that occupied by the Philadelphia Library. This Library, which now embraces over fifty thousand volumes, and is continually increasing by the purchase of new publications, was founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin. Its commencement was, by the depositing in one room, for mutual reference, the books belonging to the Junto. Then Franklin set on foot the idea of a subscription library. The original number of subscribers was fifty, which soon increased. As Dr. Franklin remarks, "this was the mother of all the North American Subscription Libraries, now so numerous." There were comparatively few readers in Philadelphia when it was opened, but the library increased by donations, and reading became fashionable. The example was imitated in other places; and the taste for reading,

and the improvement of the mind of the people which followed, is justly claimed to have contributed in no small degree to the stand taken by the colonists in defence of their rights, which resulted in the Revolutionary struggle, and its glorious conclusion.

This library afforded Franklin the means of improvement, by constant study, for which he had set apart an hour or two each day; thus in some measure repairing the loss of the learned education which his father had intended for him. But this was the only amusement which he permitted himself; although his situation now daily grew easier, his original habits of frugality continuing. His father, in his youth, had frequently repeated to him the saying of Solomon: "*Seest thou a man diligent in his calling? He shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men.*" From this saying, early impressed upon his mind, Franklin considered industry as a means of obtaining wealth and distinction, which encouraged him; though he did not think that he should literally stand *before kings*, which afterward happened. Franklin stood in his life before *five*, and sat down with one, the king of Denmark, to dinner.

About this time, ease in his circumstances, gratitude for his blessings, and a consciousness of his

imperfections, made Franklin conceive the bold and arduous project of aiming at *moral perfection*. To do this, he endeavoured to acquire the habit of avoiding scrupulously what he knew to be wrong, and doing what he knew to be right. In order to keep a watch upon himself, he ruled a little book into departments, one for each day of the week; and one for each of what he regarded the principal virtues, under every day; so that at night he could, on a review of the day, record by simple marks of discredit what he considered his transgressions. On one page of this book he made what he called his Scheme of Order, for each day of twenty-four hours. Rising at five in the morning, the scheme required that the three first hours should be occupied by his devotions, the plan of the day's business, and the consideration of the question, "What good shall I do this day?" The next four hours, work. From twelve o'clock till two, reading or examination of his accounts, and dinner. From six to nine in the evening, putting things in their places which had been moved or used during the day, supper, music, conversation, or diversion. Then self-examination until ten, when he retired for the night. This strict rule of order, he says, cost him much trouble. He made the discovery that, while this plan was possible

for a man who had stated hours for work, like a journeyman-printer, for instance, it was not possible to be observed by a master, who must mix with the world, and receive people of business at their own hours. In this connection he relates the following pleasant anecdote :

“This article (order), therefore, cost me much painful attention, and my faults in it vexed me so much, and I made so little progress in amendment, and had such frequent relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the attempt, and content myself with a faulty character in that respect. Like the man who, in buying an axe of a smith, my neighbour, desired to have the whole of its surface as bright as the edge. The smith consented to grind it bright for him if he would turn the wheel ; he turned, while the smith pressed the broad face of the axe hard and heavily on the stone, which made the turning of it very fatiguing. The man came from the wheel to see how the work went on ; and at length would take his axe as it was, without further grinding. ‘No,’ said the smith, ‘turn on, turn on, we shall have it bright by and by ; as yet it is only speckled.’ ‘Yes,’ said the man, ‘but *I think I like a speckled axe best.*’”

But although Franklin fell far short of *moral*

perfection, the effort to attain it made him a far better and a happier man than if he had not attempted it; and in the seventy-ninth year of his life, while writing for his descendants to read, he says :

“ It may be well that my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice (the little book and plan of Order), with the blessing of God, their ancestor owed the constant felicity of his life, down to his seventy-ninth year, in which this is written. What reverses may attend the remainder is in the hand of Providence; but, if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoyed ought to help his bearing them with more resignation. To *Temperance* he ascribes his long continued health, and what is still left to him of a good constitution; to *Industry* and *Frugality*, the early easiness of his circumstances and acquisition of his fortune, with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citizen, and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned; to *Sincerity* and *Justice*, the confidence of his country, and the honourable employs it conferred upon him; and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state he was able to acquire them, all that evenness of temper, and that cheerfulness in conversation, which makes his company still sought

for, and agreeable, even to his young acquaintance."

In 1732 Franklin first published his famous Almanac, under the name of Richard Saunders, which he continued about twenty-five years. It was commonly called Poor Richard's Almanac, and under that title our readers have undoubtedly heard of it. This almanac was remarkable for the pithy sayings and proverbs which it contained; and in 1757 Franklin collected them all, and formed them into a connected discourse, as a Preface to the Almanac for that year. This Preface, under the title of *The Way to Wealth*, has been translated into several of the modern languages, printed and reprinted, until it has become familiar as household words to everybody. The maxims it contains have doubtless laid the foundations of many fortunes; but those misunderstand Franklin, who imagine that he considered money misspent, when expended for such purposes as really improve the mind, or do good to a fellow-creature.

At the age of twenty-seven Franklin commenced the study of languages, acquainting himself with French, Italian, Spanish, and to a good degree with Latin. While thus improving his own mind, and pursuing the acquisition of knowledge for the satis-

faction which it imparted to a mind like his, his philanthropy and public spirit were ever exercised to make others participants in the benefits which he derived from his studies. His newspaper was the vehicle of much benefit to the public, as in this it was his habit not only to print matter of general interest and utility, but to advocate whatever special enterprise he had in hand for the public benefit. In 1736 he paid his parents and other relations in Boston a visit, having been before unable, though he constantly corresponded with them in an affectionate manner. On his return he called upon his brother James, now settled in Newport. The meeting was very cordial and affectionate, all the differences of former years being buried and forgotten. He brought his brother's son to Philadelphia with him as an apprentice; and in after years befriended him and his widowed mother in so substantial and considerate a manner, as amply to repay to the son the loss which the father sustained by the breach of Benjamin's indentures. And here we may remark, that to all his relations and friends who needed aid, he was never sparing of it when he possessed the ability; giving not only advice, which everybody is willing to do, but substantial assistance.

In 1736, when at the age of thirty-one, he received his first public appointment, that of Clerk to the Assembly. In 1737 he was appointed Deputy Postmaster at Philadelphia. He continued Clerk of the Assembly till 1750, when he was elected a Representative from Philadelphia; and the same compliment was annually continued for fourteen years, without Franklin's asking an individual for his vote or influence. In 1749 he had taken as an active partner in his business Mr. David Hall, and retired, remaining a silent partner, and purposing, with the sufficient but moderate fortune which he had acquired, to devote the remainder of his life to philosophical studies and scientific amusements. But his fellow-citizens, finding him at leisure, were disposed to claim his services. In addition to his election to the Assembly, he was made a member of the Common Council, and the Governor put him in commission as a Justice of the Peace. In deliberative Assemblies he was put upon important committees, and intrusted with the most arduous and responsible commissions. In debate he usually carried his point. This he attributed to the modest manner in which he brought forward his opinions, as described in a previous chapter; since he says of himself, that he was "but a bad speaker, never eloquent,

subject to much hesitation in the choice of words, and hardly correct in language."

Nor were these formal and official modes the only ones in which he was employed in the public service. So much was his wisdom esteemed, that it was said to be impossible to carry through a public voluntary enterprise or association without the countenance of Franklin. *What does Franklin think of it?* was the first question asked when any new undertaking was offered to the judgment of the citizens. We find Franklin connected with the origin of an effective Fire Department, and with lighting, paving, and watching the streets. Franklin originated the American Philosophical Society. Franklin procured the erection of a building for preachers of all denominations, in Fourth Street above Market. Franklin originated the plan of the Academy, which afterward occupied that building, until it was recently taken down, and a commodious and beautiful structure erected on its site for the same purposes. Franklin, though not the originator of the Pennsylvania Hospital, was so efficient a labourer for it, that he is sometimes spoken of as the founder, though he awards the credit to Dr. Thomas Bond. He also laboured so actively in procuring the formation of a military association

for the defence of the Province in the war between Great Britain and Spain, that he was justly regarded as the soul of the enterprise, and was elected colonel of the regiment raised ; an honour which he declined, esteeming himself unfit for it. He also made many useful inventions, patents for which were taken out by others, among which was the well-known "Franklin Stove," for burning wood.

Such were a part only of the services which Franklin rendered at this period of his life ; the benefits of which, by example and by suggestion, have been continually increasing since. We now come to the great event of his life, that which has made his name most famous, and which, already of vast practical benefit, is destined to be of more hereafter than the mind can now compass or conceive. We speak of his discoveries in electricity. In 1746 his attention was called to the subject of electricity, while in Boston, by Dr. Spence, who had lately arrived from Scotland, and showed him some electrical experiments with a glass tube. The subject, being new, highly interested Franklin. Shortly after his return to Philadelphia, the Library Company received from Mr. Peter Collinson, in London, a similar glass tube, with some account of the manner of performing experiments with it.

Franklin immediately seized the opportunity of repeating the experiments which he had seen in Boston, to which he added those of which the account was transmitted from England, and many new ones which were suggested to his philosophical mind by practice. He caused similar tubes to be made in Philadelphia, and distributed among his friends, so that at length there were several persons engaged in the performance of curious electrical experiments. For one of them, Mr. Kinnersly, Franklin wrote two lectures. Mr. Kinnersly procured a splendid apparatus to be made from the models which Franklin had constructed for his own use, and these lectures were everywhere popular and useful.

In 1749, Franklin first suggested his theory, explaining the phenomena of thunder-gusts and the aurora borealis upon electrical principles; and, in the same year, conceived the bold and grand idea of actually drawing down the lightning by sharp-pointed rods. While the matter was yet but theory, he argued upon the advantages which would accrue, by the protection of buildings, ships, &c.; a *theory* which has now passed into a highly useful and salutary *fact* all over the civilized world.

It was not until the summer of 1752, that he completed his discovery by actual experiments.

His original design was, to place an insulated pointed rod upon some high tower, for the trial of the experiment ; but there was at this time no tower in Philadelphia which would serve the purpose. At length the thought of a kite occurred to him. He prepared one of silk, as better adapted to withstand the rain than paper. To the upright stick of the kite an iron rod was affixed. The string was hempen twine, except the lower end, which was silk, and where the twine terminated a key was attached.

With this apparatus he proceeded to the fields when he perceived a thunder-gust approaching. He was accompanied only by his son ; for the experiment was one so daring, and, if it failed, would be pronounced so foolish, that he did not care to run the risk of ridicule, and perhaps of pity, should the attempt prove abortive. Upon its success rested the truth of what he had been long advancing, relative to the theory of electricity, and its identity with lightning.

The kite was raised. A thunder-cloud passed over it—still there were no signs of electricity. Doubts and despair of the result which he had been labouring to establish began to come over him, when suddenly he observed the fibres of the hempen string

bristling up in an erect position. He presented his knuckle to the key, and a spark followed! Repeated sparks were drawn from the key, a vial was charged, and several other successful trials were made. What must have been his sensations of triumph at this moment! The experiment was completely successful; his theory was established, and Franklin's name was made immortal.

CHAPTER VIII.

Franklin receives the Copley Medal, and Degrees from Yale and Harvard—Is elected a Member of the Royal Philosophical Society—Importance of small Things—Caps and Mittens—Chosen a Delegate to the Convention at Albany, 1754—Plan of Union of the Colonies—Franklin provides Wagons for Gen. Braddock—Superintends the Fortifications on the Pennsylvania Frontier—Chosen Colonel of the Militia—Review of the Disputes between Pennsylvania and the Proprietaries—Disaster to Franklin's Apparatus—Franklin sent to England as Agent of the Assembly—St. George on Horseback.



FRANKLIN'S wonderful discoveries in electricity, and his papers and letters upon that and other sciences, upon government, and political and domestic economy, procured him an almost immediate contemporary reputation; for although some effort was made by the jealous and interested to withhold his due, envy itself could at last deny him justice no longer. His papers, refused a place at first in the London Philosophical Society's Transactions, made the fortune of a bookseller who published them in a separate work. The substance of them was translated into several of the languages of Europe, and

in France the scientific men reproduced his experiments with the same results. Then the Philosophical Society in London published a summary of what was by this time in every scientific man's knowledge; thus giving at second-hand, what they might have had while fresh and novel. They also presented him with the Copley Medal for 1753, a mark of high respect, and gave him a still greater token of distinguished consideration, by election into their body without his request; excusing him the customary fees, which are very large, and giving him their Transactions, as from time to time they were published, gratis. By this his pleasure in philosophical pursuits was increased, and his usefulness greatly enhanced. About the same time he was complimented with honorary degrees, by Yale College and Harvard University. These were but the commencement of similar compliments, which were never bestowed where they were better deserved. In the same year (1753) he was appointed Postmaster General in America, jointly with Mr. William Hunter.

While mindful of these high scientific employments and important offices, he was attentive to small things and small improvements. He correctly argues that "human felicity is produced, not so

much by great pieces of good fortune, that seldom happen, as by little advantages that occur every day. Thus, if you teach a poor young man to shave himself and keep his razor in order, you may contribute more to the happiness of his life than in giving him a thousand guineas! This sum may be soon spent, the regret only remaining of having foolishly consumed it; but, in the other case, he escapes the frequent vexation of waiting for barbers, and of their sometimes dirty fingers, offensive breaths, and dull razors; he shaves when most convenient to him, and enjoys daily the pleasure of its being done with a good instrument."

When we read Franklin's writings, we find the lessons of his wisdom drawn, not from the great events which happen only to people in his prominent position, but the small ones which occur to everybody. Arguing that the use of superfluities may produce more than it consumes, he relates, as an illustration, that the skipper of a small shallop, which was employed between Philadelphia and Cape May, had done him some small service for which he refused to be paid. Mrs. Franklin, understanding that the skipper had a daughter, sent her a new-fashioned cap. Three years after, this skipper being at Franklin's house, with a passenger, an

old farmer of Cape May, mentioned the cap, and how much his daughter had been pleased with it. "But," he added, "it proved a dear cap to our congregation." "How so?" "When my daughter appeared with it at meeting, it was so much admired that all the girls resolved to get such caps from Philadelphia; and my wife and I computed that the whole could not have cost less than a hundred pounds." "True," said the farmer, his passenger, "but you do not tell all the story. I think the cap was, nevertheless, an advantage to us, for it was the first thing that put our girls upon knitting worsted mittens for sale at Philadelphia, that they might have wherewithal to buy caps and ribbons there; and you know that that industry has continued, and is likely to continue and increase to a much greater value, and answer better purposes." Franklin playfully says in conclusion, that upon the whole, he was more reconciled to this little piece of luxury, since not only were the girls made happier by having fine caps, but the Philadelphians by the supply of warm mittens. And we may add, as a commentary upon the anecdote, that it conveys in a pleasant and easily remembered way, the pith and essence of many a bulky volume upon trade and commerce.

In all that Franklin wrote, scientific, moral, or

humorous, he had a philanthropic or useful object in view. This is true no less of his private correspondence than of his writings for the public ; and his letters, addressed to his connections and friends, many of which have been published since his death, forming a large collection, embrace lessons of wisdom, combined with a grace and excellence of epistolary composition which have seldom been equalled ; and when the various circumstances under which these letters were written are considered, we may safely say, that as a whole they have never been excelled. It is from his correspondence that much of the practical wisdom is quoted, upon which his reputation rests. Equally felicitous in whatever he undertook to say, his letters descriptive of his philosophical experiments, his lessons of frugality and household economy to his connections, and his discussions of such subjects as the art of swimming, are all models. One reason of this general excellence, and, we may add, the great reason was, that he never undertook to write or to talk of that which he did not comprehend.

His strict economy of time enabled him to pursue the useful and scientific speculations which were his delight, even after he was engrossed by public employments. From his first entrance into official life,

he may be said to have been incessantly engaged in the service of his fellow-citizens and of his country. In 1754, war between Great Britain and her dependencies and France being apprehended, Franklin was chosen a delegate to attend a convention of representatives of the several colonies, which assembled at Albany, N. Y., to concert plans for the mutual defence. In this body Franklin brought forward a plan for the general union of the colonies, for the purposes of defence and other general objects. It was similar in many of its principles and features to the Federal Union of the United States, leaving each colony its domestic affairs uninterfered with. The plan was unanimously agreed to, after debate in the convention, and submitted to the Home Government in England, and to the Assemblies of the several colonies. But, in England, it was thought to give too much power to the people of the provinces; and in America, it was objected that it gave too much to the crown; and it was thus rejected upon both sides of the water—pretty good proof that the rights of each party were impartially respected in it. Had it been adopted, many of the grievances which led to the revolutionary war would have been avoided, and that great event would thus, probably, have been long postponed. The over-

ruling Providence which directs the affairs of nations, set the good counsel of Franklin aside; and temporary expedients were adopted, which resulted in the attempt at taxation of the people, by a body in which they had no representatives, the British Parliament; and this taxation of an unrepresented people led eventually to the revolutionary war.

The next important public service in which we find Franklin engaged, was the procuring of wagons and supplies for Gen. Braddock's army; with whose disastrous defeat the reader is familiar from other books, as the affair was connected with the history of Washington. In his life will be found an account of the disastrous battle of Monongahela. Franklin's services were most important, as, so much was he known and respected, that his personal guarantee obtained supplies which could not otherwise have been had in season. Notwithstanding his patriotism and public spirit, he was never fully compensated by the British Government for his actual expenditures.

In 1755, Franklin having been active in procuring the passage of two Acts through the Assembly, one for the raising of sixty thousand pounds, and the other for the enrolling and disciplining of a voluntary militia, was appointed a commissioner for dis-

bursing the money raised by one Act, and chosen a colonel of the militia enrolled under the other. The Indians having burned Gnadenhutten, a Moravian settlement, then on the frontier, killed the inhabitants, and committed other massacres, the Governor of Pennsylvania appointed Franklin to raise troops, and build three forts for the defence of the frontier. This service he executed satisfactorily; for, as Franklin says of another, we may say of him, "though not bred a soldier, he was sensible and sagacious in himself, and attentive to good advice from others, capable of forming judicious plans, and quick and active in carrying them into execution."

A military commission was not much, however, to Franklin's taste. When several years before elected a colonel of a voluntary regiment, it will be remembered he declined accepting the honour; but upon his second election in 1756, he consented to serve. The commission, however, was one of short date, for the law under which the regiment was formed was repealed in England. A brief review of the character of the institutions of Pennsylvania, as a colony, will make the reader understand some important events in Franklin's life. William Penn, whose liberality, benevolence, and enlightened views, have made his name dear to all lovers of his race,

obtained such a charter from the British crown, as seemed to secure the political rights of the colonists on the broadest and surest basis. Under this charter Penn gave another charter to the people, which secured universal tolerance in religion, and gave so great freedom in legislation, that the Province seemed, theoretically at least, independent.

But, as is more or less the case with all human institutions, the operation of this system developed troublesome defects. The sons of William Penn, when they became Proprietaries, sent out Deputy-Governors with imperative instructions, which often conflicted with the wishes of the people, and which compelled the Executive to refuse assent to laws which were essential to the welfare of the Province. The legislation of the Province in the course of time became clogged with new difficulties.

All laws, after they had gone through the forms of legislation in the Province, though they went into effect as soon as passed, were sent to England for examination. They were laid first before the Board of Trade, then examined by the Crown Solicitor, then passed upon by the Board of Trade, and then sent to the King's Council for final action. If approved, the law stood; if rejected, its operation was instantly suspended in the Province, and the

Act declared null and void. It was in this way that the Act under which Franklin had been chosen colonel was repealed; but he remained in office long enough to be honoured by a salute before his door, from his regiment; which empty honour knocked down and broke many glasses of his electrical apparatus.

It will be seen that this made an agent of the Assembly necessary in England. If the Proprietaries disliked an Act which had passed the Provincial Legislature, they employed counsel to argue against it before the Board of Trade. Thus, the passage of a law in which the wishes of the Proprietaries were at all interfered with, was a scene of troublesome contention from beginning to end, even if successful. Their Deputy-Governor opposed it in Pennsylvania, refusing his signature. Franklin, on these occasions, was for fourteen years the champion of the Assembly. It was customary in those days, when the Governor of a Province sent a Message to the Assembly, for the Assembly to vote a reply. These replies, arguing the point at issue with the Governor, were almost always from the pen of Franklin; and in these were first publicly exhibited, the knowledge and aptitude as a politician, the judgment, and the sound views of the rights

of the people, the sterling republicanism, and commanding talents, which afterward called him into the service of the thirteen provinces, when they claimed their title to rise from colonies to Thirteen United States, free and independent.

In 1757, so much and so hopelessly had the Assembly and the Governors clashed, that the Assembly determined to send a special agent, with a remonstrance, to the Proprietaries. Franklin was chosen as this agent. His instructions were, to see the Proprietaries, present them the remonstrance, and endeavour to bring about an amicable arrangement of the difficulties. Failing in this, he was furnished with a petition to the Crown. The commission was a highly important one, requiring a man of precisely the character that Franklin possessed; and we have endeavoured to state in as clear and brief a manner as possible, the difficulties which encumbered the business. If our readers have found the statement *dry*, they must recollect that no history or biography can be made *intelligible* without some uninteresting details; and, taking Franklin as an example, they must not be afraid of a little labour in the acquisition of knowledge, if they would share in the benefits which knowledge confers.

Franklin took passage in a vessel which was to depart on the first of April. But, as she was a government packet, and her time of sailing was in the control of Lord Loudon, a very dilatory man, then Governor of New York, the vessel did not start until about the last of June! Franklin records in his memoirs, an amusing remark of a gentleman upon Lord Loudon's character. This gentleman had waited two weeks for letters, which his lordship had promised daily to write. "Is it possible," said Franklin, "when he is so great a writer? for I see him constantly at his escritoire." "Yes," said the other, "always at his desk; but he is like St. George on the signs, *always on horseback, and never rides on.*"

CHAPTER IX.

Franklin's Arrival in London—He finds that his Fame has preceded him, and receives high Literary and other Honours—His Devotion to Philosophical Pursuits, and his laborious Attention to the Public Service—Completes his Business—Declines the Invitation of Friends to remain in England, and returns to America—The Paxton Murders—Franklin's important Services—Revival of Difficulties between the Governor and the Assembly—The Stamp Act—Franklin loses his Election to the Assembly—Is deputed Agent to England—Strong Opposition against him—Flattering Compliment of his Fellow-Citizens—Sails for England.



FRANKLIN arrived in London, on his mission to the Proprietaries, on the 27th of July, 1757. On his passage out, the vessel in which he sailed narrowly escaped shipwreck on the Scilly Rocks; and in a letter to his wife, after giving an account of his landing, he adds: "The bells ringing for church, we went thither immediately, and, with hearts full of gratitude, returned sincere thanks to God for the mercies we had received."

Under what different circumstances from his first, was this second visit made to London! Then, a poor

boy, he found himself in a strange country, alone and unfriended, the dupe of a designing man. Now, ripe in years and experience, and honourably deputed on an important trust, he came to review the scenes which he had visited thirty years before, and to verify the promise which his conduct on his first visit had indicated for his future fame. In the mean time, his brilliant discoveries in electricity, and his scientific correspondence with many learned men in Europe, had prepared them to welcome him; while his political prominence in Pennsylvania, and his able publications upon colonial and other questions, gave him eminence as a statesman. It was Franklin who urged upon the British Ministry the conquest of Canada, by his pamphlets, demonstrating the advantages of waging war with France in America, rather than in Europe.

The Universities of St. Andrews, of Edinburgh, and of Oxford, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws. Learned Societies in every part of Europe, pressed upon him the compliment of membership. Letters of congratulation and welcome reached him from all countries, and his correspondence was sought by the most distinguished philosophers of that day. He remained in Europe five years, during which period he travelled much,

both in England, in tracing the history of the Franklin family, and upon the continent. He also visited Scotland, forming an acquaintance with distinguished men of that country. He was presented with the freedom of Edinburgh, being "admitted a burgess and guild-brother of the city, as a mark of the affectionate respect of the Magistrates and Council for a gentleman, whose amiable character, greatly distinguished for usefulness to the society which he belonged to, and love to all mankind, had long ago reached them across the Atlantic Ocean." In other places he was paid the same compliment.

These honours and attentions had no other effect upon him, than to double his diligence in the pursuit of that practical knowledge which had won for him such high praise. Wherever he travelled, by sea or by land, matters which had passed for years without suggesting a thought to common observers, formed the hint to Franklin of curious theories, and valuable and useful discoveries. Everything which he touched was improved by him. His criticisms on music, and his invention of a curious instrument called the Armonica, once much in vogue, are proofs of the universality of his genius; or perhaps we should say of that habit of analysis, and resort to first and simple principles, which mark a truly phi-

losophical mind, and which were applied by Franklin to all his investigations.

Nor, with these various occupations and pursuits occupying his leisure, was he unmindful of the public business. This he prosecuted, not as an eye-servant, careful to preserve only the appearance of service, but like a patriot, with his whole heart and soul. His publications in the newspapers and in pamphlets, in vindication of his countrymen, and in furtherance of the objects of his mission, and of other schemes of public benefit and utility, during the five years for which he remained at this time in England, would have made the life of any other man remarkable, and have furnished a much more ample capital than that upon which many distinguished men have been famous.

While the disputes between the Proprietaries and the Assembly of Pennsylvania involved several other points, the main difficulty was the claim made by the former, that their immense estates in Pennsylvania should be exempted from the taxes levied for the government of the Province. Franklin met great delays in bringing the object to bear for which he was deputed ; but at length, the influence of his writings and his exertions, aided by occurrences in Pennsylvania, brought the dispute to a compromise.

The Governor of Pennsylvania, contrary to his instructions, had assented to a law imposing a tax, in which the estates of the Proprietaries were not exempted. The law was sent over to England for approval. The Proprietaries opposed, and Franklin defended it; and the result was a withdrawal of the opposition, on Franklin's pledging himself, as the agent of the Assembly, that the Proprietaries' estates should be equitably taxed, in the same proportion as other property. Thus, after about three years' effort, was his mission accomplished. A further trust was imposed upon him in 1760, by a vote of the Assembly directing him to receive thirty thousand pounds, a Parliamentary grant to the Province. This sum was paid into the hands of Franklin, and invested and disbursed by him to the entire satisfaction of the Assembly.

Mr. Strahan, afterwards the King's Printer, and a Member of Parliament, with whom Franklin had long corresponded, strove very hard to induce him to remove to England and reside there. There is no doubt that, in a pecuniary point of view, the move would have been for Franklin's benefit. But his wife was averse to it. Besides, Franklin loved his country too well to desire to leave it, and had higher motives for his conduct than considerations

of mere gain ; and he accordingly declined the proposals of his friends, and returned to Philadelphia in the autumn of 1762, his public business abroad being satisfactorily concluded.

He had been regularly chosen a Member of the Assembly during his absence ; and, on his return, that body voted him three thousand pounds sterling for his services abroad, and passed a vote of thanks for the benefits rendered, not only to the Province of Pennsylvania, but to America in general. And now came a new proof of his character and influence. The close of the war with France had occasioned the disbanding of the armies which were posted on the frontiers of the Province ; and the Indians, taking advantage of this, committed many depredations and murders in the defenceless settlements. In retaliation, a party of mounted men, principally inhabitants of Donegal and Paxton townships, in York county, attacked a settlement of friendly Indians, about twenty in number, and murdered the old men, women, and children, the rest being absent at work. Those who by absence escaped the massacre, were conducted to Lancaster, and locked in the jail for security. The Governor issued his proclamation, calling upon the officers and the people to aid in bringing the perpetrators to punish-

ment, but it produced no effect. A party of the same insurgents marched into Lancaster, and breaking open the jail, butchered the poor Indians who had been placed there for safety. The Indian converts of the Moravian Brethren, and other friendly Indians, in number about one hundred and twenty, repaired to Philadelphia for security. The Governor issued another proclamation; but these official promulgations of threats and warnings appear to have had no influence whatever, for the insurgents threatened to come down to Philadelphia, and put to death all the Indians who had taken refuge there. The Assembly, then in session, immediately determined to repel any such attack; and the poor fugitives were taken into the city, and lodged in barracks.

Franklin had not been idle. He had written and published a "Narrative of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County," in which the enormity of the murder of these friendly Indians, and its wicked and barbarous injustice, were most vividly painted. A terrible spirit was abroad; and there were not wanting strong advocates, who defended the conduct of the "Paxton Boys" with much specious sophistry. But the time had now arrived when a more forcible argument than the pen was needed, and a stronger defence than logic, however sound,

was necessary to protect the weak. There was no regular militia in the Province; the bill to establish a voluntary militia having been lost in England, as the reader has already been informed. Franklin was appealed to in the exigency, and, as he had done on two occasions before, he formed a military association. Nearly one thousand citizens enrolled for the defence of the poor Indians who had thrown themselves upon the hospitality of the city. The Paxton Boys, who had advanced upon their bloody errand, paused at Germantown, hearing of the preparations which had been made to receive them. Franklin and three other gentlemen were appointed by the Governor to go out and meet them. By the arguments of Franklin, addressed to them personally, strengthened no doubt by the more cogent ones which had been prepared under his direction in Philadelphia, the insurgents were induced to return peaceably to their homes. The narrative above referred to, written by Franklin, is one of the most remarkable of the productions of his pen.

Difficulties were now revived between the Governor and the Assembly. Notwithstanding the order in council that had been issued, requiring the equal taxation of the lands of the Proprietaries with those held by citizens, Gov. John Penn, who was appointed

in 1763, sought to evade the plain construction of it, and substitute another. The dispute ran so high that, in 1764, the Assembly passed a series of resolutions, the purport of which was, that the peace and happiness of the Province could never be restored, until the government of it was taken from the Proprietaries, and lodged in the Crown. The people seconded these resolutions by petitions addressed to the King, praying for a change of government; a movement in part produced by a pamphlet from the pen of Franklin. The Assembly adopted a similar petition by a large majority, though the Speaker, unwilling to sign the document, resigned his place. Franklin was elected his successor, and as Speaker signed the petition, which, with the others, was forwarded to the agent of the Province in London.

At the next session, a matter of more general importance came up. In this year (1764) an immense excitement was created throughout the colonies, by the intention of the British Ministry, to derive a revenue from America by stamp duties, in violation of the principle that subjects should not be taxed, except by themselves or their representatives. The Assembly sent instructions to their agent, remonstrating against any such scheme; and signing these

instructions was the last act of Dr. Franklin as Speaker of the House. At the next election, the Proprietary party, resolved to get rid of a man who had been so constant and able an opponent, bent all their efforts to defeat Dr. Franklin. They succeeded in procuring a majority of twenty-four votes against him, in four thousand; and, after having been elected for fourteen successive years, he was this year defeated. But the triumph against him was short-lived; for almost the first act of the Assembly was, to appoint Dr. Franklin a special agent, to proceed to England, and there take charge of the petition to the King, and prosecute the objects he had so faithfully laboured for at home.

The vexation of his opponents, as will readily be imagined, was extreme. The party adverse to him opposed the appointment with the most desperate zeal, and not only made violent speeches in the House, but caused a remonstrance to be signed by their friends not in the Legislature, and presented to that body. This movement, being regarded as an attempt to prejudice or bias the House, had no other effect than to unite his friends, and to hasten the action which his opponents so earnestly deprecated. When the appointment was made, the remonstrants put their objections in the form of a

protest, but the House refused to receive it, pronouncing it unprecedented and unparliamentary. The authors then caused it to be published in the newspapers, an act of gratuitous enmity, as no possible end could be effected by it except the mortification of Franklin. It is proper to remind the reader, however, that in all these charges and objections, nothing whatever was alleged against Franklin's integrity or character as a man. The objections made were on grounds entirely political, and brought out a most spirited and able reply from Dr. Franklin.

In twelve days after his appointment, he was ready to leave Philadelphia for England, upon his mission. There was no money in the Provincial treasury to defray his expenses, but the Assembly voted that in the next bill for raising money these expenses should be provided for. Upon this pledge, the merchants of Philadelphia in two hours subscribed eleven hundred pounds, as a loan to the public for the object; and, on the 7th of November, 1764, Franklin left the city for Chester, where he was to embark, accompanied by a cavalcade of three hundred citizens. Thus did faction, in endeavouring to defeat and crush a friend of the people, procure him a civic triumph.

Franklin was much affected by these proceedings. "The affectionate leave taken of me by so many dear friends at Chester," he writes, "was very endearing. God bless them, and all Pennsylvania!" And in his reply to the protest, which we have already noticed, he says: "I am now to take leave, perhaps a last leave, of the country I love, and in which I have spent the greatest part of my life. *Esto perpetua*; I wish every kind of prosperity to my friends, and I forgive my enemies." He was now in his 59th year, and seems to have looked upon his life as nearing its close. But many years, the most active and useful of his life, inasmuch as they embraced the application of his matured experience to the exigencies of a great national crisis, yet remained to him.

CHAPTER X.

Passage of the Stamp Act—Its Effects in America—Successful Resistance of the Colonists—Examination of Dr. Franklin on the Subject—Repeal of the Stamp, and Passage of the Declaratory Act—Prophetic Letter of Dr. Franklin—Tax Law of 1767—Non-Importation Agreements—Franklin appointed Agent for three more Provinces—Becomes obnoxious to the British Government—Arbitrary Course of Lord Hillsborough—Franklin makes a tour through different parts of Britain—Dines with the King of Denmark—The Electrical Controversy—Compliment to Franklin in Dublin.



THE month of March, 1765, is memorable for the passage, by the English Parliament, of the famous Stamp Act. The rumoured intention of the Ministry to bring forward such a measure had, as we have seen, been the subject of much popular commotion, and in some cases of legislative action, in the colonies. The consummation of that intention was followed by most resolute opposition and remonstrance in the legislative bodies in America, and by popular violence and resistance, of a character most alarming to the friends of the prerogative. A general Congress, or Convention of delegates from the colonies,

the first meeting of the kind, was held in New York, at which a declaration of rights, and an enumeration of grievances, were set forth. This instrument asserted taxation by themselves only, and trial by jury, as among the inherent rights of the colonists, as well as other subjects of the British Crown; and similar steps were taken in the Colonial Assemblies. The newspapers were full of earnest discussions of a question so vitally affecting the rights of Americans; and some of the ablest men in the country wrote pamphlets, remarkable alike for soundness and depth of reasoning, and warmth of appeal to manhood and patriotism—qualities which are seldom found in the same performance.

Popular meetings were held, and the zealous opposition of the people was inflamed to the very highest pitch of angry and determined resistance. The Legislative bodies declared against the principles under which the British Government acted; the people seized something more tangible, and declared against the agents who had accepted appointments under the Act. The distributors of the stamps were threatened, and, where they proved contumacious, were burned in effigy, and in some cases tarred and feathered. They were odious in the sight of the people, for having accepted office

under an Act which was justly obnoxious; and so resolute was the opposition, that every stamp officer in the country was compelled to resign his commission; and when the stamped paper arrived, the governors were compelled to keep it on board of armed vessels in the harbours; and it was all, at length, sent back to England. On the 1st of November, the day on which the Act was to have taken place, neither stamp officer nor stamped paper was to be found in the colonies.

The ministry which carried the Stamp Act went out soon after, and the Marquis of Rockingham, who succeeded, deemed it advisable to quell the disturbance, or allay it, by a repeal of the obnoxious Act. The discussion of the question of this repeal was conducted with great zeal and ability by both parties in the English Commons; and Dr. Franklin and other gentlemen were summoned and examined. He was questioned in the presence of a full House, by members of all parties; and the examination took a range exceedingly wide. It embraced questions developing, on the part of the answerer, a readiness of reply, and a perfect acquaintance with the condition of the colonies, the nature of their relation to the mother country, the principles of constitutional law, the operations of finance, and

the history of English and Colonial politics, which astonished his auditors. The dignity of his manner, his promptness and self-possession, and the epigrammatic neatness of many of his answers, remind the reader of his early aptness in the *Socratic Method*.

In consequence of the dispute about taxation, non-importation agreements had been entered into in America, and many of the questions related to this subject. Franklin said, in answer to questions, that he did not know a single article imported into the Northern Colonies, that they could not either do without or make themselves. He said that the articles imported were, either necessities, conveniences, or luxuries. The first, with a little industry, they could make at home; the second they could do without, until able to provide themselves; the third, forming the far greater part, they would strike off immediately. The superfluities, he said, were articles purchased and consumed, because they were the fashion in a respected country, but if the Act was not repealed would be despised and rejected. When asked if the Americans would be willing to prefer a worse article of their own, at the same price, over a better article from abroad, he answered, that people would pay as freely to gratify one passion as another, their resentment as their pride.

He said, when asked whether the Americans would pay the stamp duty if it were moderated, "No, never, unless compelled by force of arms;" and that he did not see how a military force could be applied for that purpose. "Suppose a military force sent into America, they will find nobody in arms; what are they then to do? They cannot force a man to take stamps who chooses to do without them. They will not find a rebellion; they may indeed make one." Again, "I can only judge what other people will think, and how they will act, by what I feel within myself. I have a great many debts due me in America, and I had rather they should remain unrecoverable by any law, than submit to the Stamp Act. They will be debts of honour." When asked how the Americans would receive another tax, imposed upon the same principles, he said, "Just as they do this, they will never pay it."

Such are specimens of some of his answers, but the statistical replies and weighty reasoning cannot be given in an abstract. There can be no doubt, that the examination of Dr. Franklin had great weight in enabling the Ministry to carry the measure of repeal. The answers of Dr. Franklin upon the occasion, stand among the best evidences, both of his patriotism and his ready practical wit and wisdom.

“What,” it was asked at the close, “used to be the pride of Americans?” He answered, “To indulge in the fashions and manufactures of Great Britain.” “What is now their pride?” “To wear their old clothes over again, until they can make new ones.”

The Stamp Act was repealed in March, 1766; but the Act repealing it was accompanied by another, declaring the right of Parliament “to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever;” thus asserting the very claim, in opposition to which the people contended while resisting the Stamp Act. But the repeal of the obnoxious Act restored temporary quiet, while the colonists still watched with jealous eyes the proceedings of the government. Dr. Franklin’s correspondence at this time was voluminous, with friends upon both sides of the water. In a letter, written to Lord Kames, occurs the following prophetic passage: “America, an immense territory, favoured by nature with all advantages of climate, soil, great navigable rivers, and lakes, must become a great country, populous and mighty; and will, in a less time than is generally conceived, be able to shake off any shackles that may be imposed upon her, and, perhaps, place them on the imposers. In the mean time, every act of oppression will sour their tempers, lessen greatly, if not annihilate, the

profits of your commerce with them, and hasten their final revolt; for the seeds of liberty are universally found there, and nothing can eradicate them."

During the tranquillity which followed the repeal of the Stamp Act, Franklin visited Paris, furnished with letters from the French Ambassador in London. In 1767, however, things were in a ferment again. Another change of ministers had taken place, and the Government, which now seemed committed to its purpose of asserting the right to tax the colonies, imposed a tax on sundry articles imported into the Provinces. This Act gave great offence, which was increased by laws for establishing commissioners of the customs in the colonies, and making the salaries of governors, judges, and other officers, chargeable upon the Crown, instead of payable by the Colonial Assemblies. This latter change, while it rendered the officers entirely independent of the people, had another mischievous tendency—the recognition of the right of the Home Government to tax the colonies. Town meetings were held, beginning in Boston, and extending all over the Provinces, at which the people pledged themselves to all modes of legal and peaceful resistance; and agreements were drawn up and signed, by which the subscribers

pledged themselves to the use of American, and the disuse of foreign articles. Franklin was all this time busy in England, with his pen, and with the weight of his personal influence; and he constantly encouraged his friends in America to persevere. Gov. Hutchinson of Massachusetts alleges, that the opponents of the government in that Province were guided by his advice; and, as is remarked by one of his biographers, neither in Massachusetts, nor elsewhere, had the patriots any reason to regret that they followed such advice, or were guided by such a counsellor.

Dr. Franklin's son being Governor of New Jersey, he had been in the habit of rendering occasional services to that colony, and in 1769 he was chosen the agent for New Jersey. During the year previous a similar appointment was conferred upon him by Georgia; and in the year following, Massachusetts, with some of whose leading citizens he had long corresponded, chose him, through the Legislature, the agent of that colony, thus giving him the interests of four of the Provinces to look after. But Dr. Franklin, by his active services in the cause of his country, and his voluminous writings, had now become obnoxious to the British Government. A hint was thrown out, by way of intimidation,

that he would be removed from his office of Deputy Postmaster General in America. As no remissness of duty could be charged, the removal, if made must be upon purely political grounds. He continued his labours without abatement, in the defence of the rights of his country, and refused to oblige his enemies by resigning the Post Office, though plentifully abused to induce him to do so.

Another mode of annoyance was hit upon. Lord Hillsborough, then American Secretary, refused to recognise him as agent for Massachusetts, protesting that no agent should for the future be attended to, except such as had been appointed by a regular Act of the Assembly, signed by the Governor. Franklin explained that it was by a vote, and not by an Act that agents were appointed, and that they represented the people, not the Governor. Lord Hillsborough refused to look at his papers, and behaved through the whole conference in a most uncourteous manner. Franklin at the close of the interview, said he believed that it was of little consequence whether he was acknowledged or not ; for, as affairs were now administered, an agent could be of little use to any of the colonies. Lord Hillsborough procured the passage by the Board of Trade, of a resolution embodying his strange views ;

and while he remained in office, the agents were compelled to prosecute their business by written applications, and indirect influence with the members.

The Americans adhering, with wonderful and patriotic unanimity to their non-importation agreements, and trade between the colonies and the mother country continuing more and more to decline, the ministry, in 1770, procured an Act repealing the duties imposed on all articles imported into the colonies, except tea. But as this measure was taken purely and entirely as a commercial one, and as the article tea was reserved, only to assert the right to tax, which the colonists denied, the Act increased instead of diminished the excitement in America. People felt insulted, that their patriotism should be supposed to be measured by their pockets, and renewed their non-importation agreements with more determination than ever.

Little was done after this, for a year or two, in the English Parliament, relative to American affairs; and Franklin took the opportunity to make excursions to different parts of England, and to Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, for the benefit of his health, which had been injured by his intense application to business. Everywhere, his reputation and character found him friends, and even those who bitterly op-

posed him as statesmen and politicians, pressed their hospitalities upon him. Lord Hillsborough, who had spoken of him in London, in very angry terms, as a "republican, and a factious, mischievous fellow," meeting him in Dublin, pressed him to call at his residence on his journey northward, in such terms as Franklin could not refuse without rudeness; particularly as his journey would carry him before his lordship's door. Lord Hillsborough detained the "factious fellow" four days, overwhelming him with politeness.

While he was thus received with courtesy by both parties, the friends of America were of course most sincere in their kindness, and it was with them that he passed his happiest hours. His old philosophical friends and correspondents renewed their hospitalities; and everything so ministered to his comfort, that he wrote to his wife: "I have so many good, kind friends here, that I could spend the remainder of my life among them with great pleasure, if it were not for my American connections, and the indelible affection I retain for that dear country, from which I have so long been in a state of exile." Among these "dear friends" we may particularly mention Dr. Shipley, the Bishop of St. Asaph's. He was called by Franklin "the

good Bishop," and was a man beloved for his virtues, and highly respected for his abilities, attainments, and steady adherence to the principles of political and civil liberty. He opposed, from the beginning, the course pursued by the British government in the American controversy, not only by his vote and influence in the House of Lords, but by his pen. His writings, particularly "The Speech intended to be Spoken," are admired as models of style and argument, and are remarkable for their ingenuousness and independence. With the Bishop and his family, the friendship of Franklin was kept up by a correspondence until his death.

During his residence in England at this time, Dr. Franklin was complimented, at the request of the King of Denmark, by being included among the sixteen invited guests to a public dinner to that monarch in London, a circumstance referred to in a previous chapter. This was a compliment to the philosopher and the man, in spite of his political principles, which cannot be supposed to have recommended him very highly to crowned heads.

Franklin was engaged as one of a committee of the Royal Society, which, under direction of the British Government, examined the Magazines at Purfleet, to devise some method of protecting them

from lightning. Franklin advised pointed conductors, to which all the members of the committee acceded except one. He vigorously defended the preferableness of blunt conductors, and gained many adherents. Franklin declined to answer his publications, as he had nothing to add to what he had already said. The pointed conductors were continued at Purfleet, but the conductors on the palace were changed from sharp to blunt. In allusion to this subject, Franklin writes to a friend: "The King's changing his *pointed* conductors for *blunt* ones is a matter of small importance to me. If I had a wish about it, it would be, that he had rejected them altogether, as ineffectual. For it is only since he thought himself and his family safe from the thunder of Heaven, that he has dared to use his own thunder in destroying his innocent subjects." The following witty epigram appeared during the sharp and blunt controversy:

"While you, great GEORGE, for safety hunt,
And sharp conductors change for blunt,
The empire's out of joint;
FRANKLIN a wiser course pursues,
And all your thunder fearless views,
By keeping to the *point*."

One of the most gratifying compliments which Franklin received, was from the Irish Parliament. He waited in Dublin until the opening of the session of that body, for the purpose of meeting its principal patriots.

“I found them,” he writes, “disposed to be friends of America, in which I endeavoured to confirm them, with the expectation that our growing weight might in time be thrown into their scale, and, by joining our interests with theirs, a more equitable treatment from this nation might be obtained for them as well as for us. There are many brave spirits among them. The gentry are a very sensible, polite, and friendly people. Their Parliament makes a most respectable figure, with a number of very good speakers in both parties, and able men of business. And I must not omit acquainting you, that it being a standing rule to admit members of the English Parliament to sit (though they do not vote) in the House among the members, while others are only admitted into the gallery, my fellow-traveller, being an English member, was accordingly admitted as such. But I supposed I must go to the gallery, when the Speaker stood up, and acquainted the House, that he understood there was in town an American gentleman of (as he was pleased to say)

distinguished character and merit, a member or delegate of some of the Parliaments of that country, who was desirous of being present at the debates of the House ; that there was a rule of the House for admitting members of English Parliaments, and that he supposed the House would consider the American Assemblies as English Parliaments ; but, as this was the first instance, he had chosen not to give any order in it without receiving their directions. On the question, the House gave a loud, unanimous *Ay* ; when two members came to me without the bar, led me in between them, and placed me honourably and commodiously.”

CHAPTER XI.

The Tea Party in Boston—The Boston Resolutions—"Rules," and "Edict"—The Hutchinson Letters—Duel in consequence—Franklin's Declaration—Appears before the Privy Council—Franklin abused, and the Massachusetts Petition dismissed—Franklin ejected from the Post Office—Abortive Attempts to ruin him—Death of Mrs. Franklin—Petition of Congress—Franklin abused in Parliament by Lord Sandwich, and eloquently defended by Lord Chatham—Consulted by the Ministry—Franklin's Patriotism.



IF all insults which can be offered to a magnanimous and patriotic people, the measuring of their motives in resisting tyranny, by money, is among the most flagrant. In such a light, as we have already remarked, did the Americans look upon the repeal of the customs' bill in 1770, excepting the single article of tea; by which the English government fancied the Americans, betrayed by its insignificance, would be induced to forego their principles, and relax their opposition, in the hope of a lucrative trade, in the importation and consumption of the free articles. But the insult was not completed, until, in 1773, the attempt was actually made to buy

the colonists outright, and tempt them for a cup of tea, to sell their birthright as freemen. An Act was passed, allowing the East India Company a drawback on the teas exported to America: that is to say, the Company were paid back the duties which teas had paid on entering England, when those teas were sent from England to America. And as the duties paid in England were much greater than those which the Government wished to collect in America, it follows that the Americans could have paid the tax, and still have had their tea at a less price than it cost them before the tax or customs' bill was passed. Thus the remonstrants were actually offered a premium to give up their resistance. How this estimate of the character of the American people was received by them, our intelligent readers do not require to be informed. Large shipments were made, in the belief of the corruptibility of the Americans. In Philadelphia and New York, the tea was not permitted to be landed; in Charleston it was put in warehouses on shore, but not suffered to be offered for sale; and in Boston it was emptied into the dock.

While these events were in progress in America, Franklin was busily at work in England, endeavouring, but ineffectually, to produce a change of the

measures of ministers. The original purpose for which he came over, to procure a change in the manner in which Pennsylvania was governed, received his early attention, and seemed many times to be in successful progress. But the more important matters, affecting the peace of all the colonies, which afterward arose, engrossed the attention of Government; and as these difficulties yearly increased, the Pennsylvania matter was further deferred, until the breaking out of the war postponed it indefinitely.

Franklin was upon the point of coming home in 1762. He was then in his 67th year, and felt the weight of increasing infirmities. But his friends urged him to wait, and the arrival of important business from the American Assemblies, and the resignation of Lord Hillsborough, after which the Colonial Agents were put on their former and more honourable footing, determined him to stay. His first business with Lord Dartmouth, the new Secretary for Colonial Affairs, was the presentation of a petition to the King, from the Legislature of Massachusetts. The Governor of that Province, in pursuance of an Act of Parliament which we have already noticed, had received his salary from the Crown. The Legislature of Massachusetts saw in

this dangerous innovation the ruin of their freedom, should it grow to a practice, and petitioned for redress. At the persuasion of Lord Dartmouth, Dr. Franklin consented that the presentation of the petition should be delayed.

Meanwhile, matters were proceeding with still greater warmth in America. News was received there, that the judges as well as the Governor were to receive their salaries from England; and the inhabitants of Boston immediately assembled, and passed resolutions of remonstrance against the measure, as tending to complete the system of bondage which had been preparing for the colonies ever since the passage of the Stamp Act. When these resolutions came into Dr. Franklin's hands, he caused them to be republished in London. Ever mindful of the honour and interest of his country, he pre-faced the resolutions with a description of the condition of the colonies, and an explanation of the nature and reason of their complaints. He represented the passage of these resolutions, and other transactions, as but the natural and necessary consequences of the unwise policy of the Government. In this same year also, 1773, he published two admirable pieces, entitled, "Rules for Reducing a Great Empire to a Small One," and "An Edict of

the King of Prussia." The *Rules*, under different heads, classify all the mischievous measures of the ministry, as directions by which any government can reduce the limits of its empire. The efficacy of these "Rules" was sufficiently proved, in the separation of the colonies from Great Britain. The Edict, however, is the best and neatest of these ironical pieces. The preamble alleges, that the early settlement of New England was made by Germans, and that as descendants of Saxon ancestors, Englishmen are bound to obey the laws of the kingdom, and submit to be taxed for the revenues of the King of Prussia; and the Edict claims of England, in favour of Prussia, the same submission and obedience that Parliament claimed of Americans. Both performances were so witty and good humoured, as to draw readers who knew or cared little about the matters in dispute between England and the colonies. Lord Mansfield said of the Edict, that "it was very *able* and very *artful* indeed, and would do mischief, by giving in England a bad impression of the measures of Government, and mischief in the colonies, by encouraging them in their contumacy."

Shortly after the passage of the Boston resolutions, the Massachusetts Legislature met, and drew

up another petition to the King, similar in tenor to the former. Dr. Franklin waited upon Lord Dartmouth with it, and requested its presentation, together with the other which had been held in suspense. Lord Dartmouth promised to comply; but the interest attending these petitions was soon overshadowed by a third, praying his Majesty to remove from office Gov. Hutchinson, and Lieut. Gov. Oliver, who, by their conduct, had rendered themselves obnoxious to the people, and had entirely lost their confidence.

This petition had its origin as follows: In 1772, Dr. Franklin procured and sent to his correspondents in Massachusetts, certain original letters, written by Gov. Hutchinson, Lieut. Gov. Oliver, and others, to Mr. Thomas Whately, a member of Parliament, and at one time a Ministerial Secretary. These letters ascribed the discontents and commotions in the Province, to a factious spirit among the people, stirred up by a few intriguing leaders; and intimated that this spirit would be subdued, and submission to the Acts of Parliament would be compelled, by the presence of a military force, and perseverance in the coercive measures already commenced. When the letters were first produced before the Massachusetts Legislature, that body voted, by a majority of one hundred and one to five, that the design and

tendency of them were to subvert the constitution, and introduce arbitrary power. They were then referred to a committee, who reported a series of resolutions in the spirit of the above vote, which, with the petition to the King, already mentioned, passed by a large majority.

While the petition was still in the hands of Lord Dartmouth, Hutchinson's letters were published in Boston, copies reached London, great excitement ensued in the political circles, and much curiosity as to how the letters went to America. Mr. Thomas Whately was dead, and his papers having gone into the hands of his brother, Mr. William Whately, he was censured for having permitted them to be taken away. Mr. Whately's suspicions fell upon Mr. John Temple, who had examined the papers by his permission, and a duel took place between Temple and Whately, in which the latter was wounded. Dr. Franklin, who knew nothing of the duel until after it had taken place, now interfered, and assumed in a public declaration the whole responsibility of the act; and declared, furthermore, that the letters were not among Mr. Thomas Whately's papers at the time that those papers passed into the hands of his brother. Mr. William Whately instantly commenced a chancery suit

against Dr. Franklin, filing a bill of declarations, all of which Dr. Franklin denied on oath. He affirmed at the same time, in reference to the letters, that when they were given to him they had no address upon them (having been probably sent in envelopes), and that he had previously no knowledge of their existence.

On the 11th of January, 1774, Dr. Franklin appeared before the Privy Council to defend the petition. Dr. Franklin was most violently abused by the Crown Solicitor in reference to the letters, but declined to answer these personal attacks, under advice of his counsel, as that matter was already before the Chancery. After the examination, the Lords of the Privy Council reported "that the petition was founded upon resolutions, formed upon false and erroneous allegations, and that the same was groundless, vexatious, and scandalous, and calculated only for the seditious purpose of keeping up a spirit of clamour and discontent in the provinces." The King approved the report, and dismissed the petition; and this supercilious treatment of the well grounded complaints of an oppressed people, added another to the irritating causes which hastened the dismemberment of the British empire.

A grand purpose of the ministers was, to crush

the "factious fellow," Franklin. It was for this end that they gave the hearing so strange a turn, and made the subject of the petition a secondary matter in their report, to the abuse of the agent of the petitioners. To this day, the manner in which he obtained the letters has never transpired; probably because he could not vindicate himself without bringing others into difficulty. The integrity of his character, made his simple allegation that he came by the letters honourably, sufficient for his friends and the friends of America. With his enemies, no proof would have been acknowledged as sufficient exculpation. To complete his ruin, if possible, this juncture was improved, as the long waited for time in which to make his removal from the Post Office a mark of disgrace, and he was instantly superseded from the office of Postmaster General in the colonies; as if the result of the Hutchinson affair had shown him to be unworthy of confidence. Conscious of having done only what his duty required, he held his peace, willing to let events work out his vindication; and, in the end, he gained new credit and character from the abortive attempts of his enemies, and was entrusted with higher confidence than before, both in England and America. And as to his expulsion from the Post Office, that removed the

only objection which existed against him—to wit, the holding of an office under a government so tyrannical; and Americans who had respected him before, now loved him with a vehemence of attachment; particularly when his manly conduct was understood in America, and the fact transpired that he kept aloof from ministers, attended no more of their levees, and sought no further intercourse with them.

Just as Dr. Franklin was anticipating a return to his country, and a happy meeting with his family, from whom he had been ten years separated, the intelligence reached him of the death of his wife. They had been married forty-four years, and the union was one of as perfect happiness as any earthly ties can confer. Their correspondence during his long absences, breathes the most affectionate spirit upon both sides; and she was a woman every way worthy of his confidence and love. She died of paralysis, on the 19th of December, 1774, and was buried in Christ Church cemetery, at the corner of Arch and Fifth Streets, Philadelphia.

The unabated confidence of Franklin's friends in America, was shown during the winter of 1774, in his reception of the petition of the first Continental Congress to the King. His Majesty laid it before

Parliament, and that body, in pursuance of the suicidal course upon which the British Government had determined, rejected it by an overwhelming majority, after a heated debate, during which the ministerial party spoke with contempt of America and her grievances, and expressed the determination to reduce the colonists to obedience at all hazards, and by force of arms if it were necessary. Arms were necessary, but the reduction to obedience did not follow.

During this year a most flattering compliment was paid Franklin, by Lord Chatham, and other members of the opposition—gentlemen, whose liberality and philanthropy laboured in vain for the arrest of the insane measures of the ministry, and whose political sagacity discerned the inevitable issue of the course of the government. These gentlemen held repeated consultations with Franklin, while maturing their plan for the pacification of the colonies. He was present by Lord Stanhope's invitation, and was introduced by Lord Chatham into the House of Lords, on the 20th of January, 1775, the day on which Chatham made his motion for the withdrawal of the royal troops from Boston, a motion which was lost by a large majority. He was present also, introduced by Lord Stanhope, on

the 1st of February, when Lord Chatham brought forward his "Plan," in the shape of a bill, and defended it with all his powers of eloquence and argument. It was rejected, two to one. In the course of the debate, Lord Sandwich was furiously abusive and passionate. He could not believe, he said, that the bill was the production of a British peer. It seemed much more like the work of some American. "And," said he, turning towards Dr. Franklin, who was leaning on the bar, "I fancy I have in my eye the person who drew it up, one of the bitterest and most mischievous enemies this country has ever known!"

In reply to this illiberal and uncourteous insinuation, Lord Chatham declared that "the bill was entirely his own; a declaration he thought himself the more obliged to make, as many of their Lordships appeared to have so mean an opinion of it; for, if it were so weak or so bad a thing, it was proper in him to take care that no other person should unjustly share in the censure it deserved. That it had heretofore been reckoned his vice, not to be apt to take advice; but he made no scruple to declare, that, if he were the first minister of this country, and had the care of settling this momentous business, he should not be ashamed of publicly calling to his

assistance, a person so perfectly acquainted with the whole of American affairs as the gentleman alluded to, and so injuriously reflected on; one, he was pleased to say, whom all Europe held in high estimation for his knowledge and wisdom, and ranked with our Boyles and Newtons; who was an honour, not to the English nation only, but to human nature!"

After this, Franklin was informally consulted by agents of the British ministry. Such was his reputation for sagacity, and such his knowledge of the character of his countrymen, and so well and justly was he supposed to represent them, that it was expected he would express the sentiments of the American people on all essential points. Notwithstanding his long absence from home, and his residence in England, out of the reach of all immediate popular excitement, it has been well remarked, that no American could have placed the demands of his countrymen on a broader foundation, supported them with a more ardent zeal, or insisted on them with a more determined resolution.

The matter was at length abandoned as hopeless. In speaking of one of the conferences, Dr. Franklin says: "I shortened it by observing that, while the Parliament claimed and exercised a power of altering

our constitutions at pleasure, there could be no agreement; for we were rendered unsafe in every privilege we had a right to, and were secure in nothing. And, it being hinted how necessary an agreement was for America, since it was so easy for Britain to burn all our seaport towns, I grew warm; said that the chief part of my little property consisted of houses in those towns; that they might make bonfires of them whenever they pleased; that the fear of losing them would never alter my resolution to resist to the last that claim of Parliament; and that it behoved this country to take care what mischief it did us; for that, sooner or later, it would certainly be obliged to make good all damages with interest!"

CHAPTER XII.

Franklin's Return to America—Chosen a Member of Congress, and appointed to other arduous Duties—Goes to Canada as Commissioner from Congress—The Declaration of Independence—Jefferson's Draft—Anecdote of the Hatter's Sign—Hanging together—Letters to Mr. Strahan—Appointed a Commissioner to reside in France, and embarks for that Country—Loan to Congress—Remarks.



WE have been particular with the history of Franklin's residence in England, because it includes a relation of his valuable services to his country, with which the reader is less likely to be well acquainted than with other portions of his life. It is a part necessary and important to be understood also, as developing the causes of the discontent of the colonies, and the principles in defence of which they arose in arms. Popular histories and biographers generally dwell more upon the striking and glorious events which followed the affairs of Lexington and Bunker Hill, than upon the silent, but, in history, no less important occurrences which preceded the resort to the last appeal. The attentive

reader has not failed to observe how important was the part which Franklin played at this trying period, and he cannot but admire the patriotism which induced our illustrious countryman to cling to the fortunes of the then despised land of his birth, when his eminent talents would have secured him preferment, ease, and literary fame in Europe, had he but consented to be a traitor, under the then flattering title of a loyalist.

He returned to America in 1775, arriving at Philadelphia on the 5th of May, and on the 6th he was unanimously chosen by the Assembly a delegate to the second Continental Congress, which met in Philadelphia on the 10th of the same month. He was now in his 70th year; but a life of exemplary temperance had left his health and faculties unimpaired, and he entered with the zeal and energy of youth into the excitement of the day. The affair of Lexington had just occurred, and, in the language of Franklin in a letter written at this period, "all America was exasperated, and more firmly united than ever."

Franklin was also appointed by the Assembly a member of the Committee of Safety, in whose arduous duties he participated; the sessions of that committee and of Congress occupying his time

almost daily, from six in the morning until four in the afternoon. In spite of his occupation, he found time to draft and offer to Congress a plan of confederation for the colonies, which resembled very nearly our present Federal Constitution. The Post Office establishment having been broken up by the public confusion, Congress made provision for its re-establishment, and appointed Dr. Franklin Postmaster General. He was appointed a member of the Secret Committee, for procuring supplies and munitions of war for the army; and was also deputed in the autumn one of a commission, to proceed to Cambridge, and confer with Gen. Washington upon the most efficient mode of organizing the army. And upon his return from this mission, the old patriot found that he had been elected by his fellow-citizens of Philadelphia a delegate to the State Assembly, from which the Proprietary interest had expelled him before his mission to England. Verily, the opinion must have continued in Philadelphia, that "nothing could be done without Franklin."

He was now a member of three important bodies which held daily meetings; Congress, the Assembly, and the Committee of Safety. He gave the sessions of the first named body the preference, when the business of the three conflicted. Nor was he an

inactive member. He entered heartily into all important business, and was always placed on such committees as required most experience and sagacity. Beside the committee which had in charge the procuring of supplies, he was on another secret committee, whose duty it was to correspond with the friends of America in Europe, and sound the views and intentions of statesmen and governments there. In March, 1776, he was deputed one of a commission to go to Canada, regulate the operations of the patriot army in that Province, and assist the Canadians in forming a civil government. This mission was unsuccessful, the desire of the Canadians for a change of government being by no means so general as had been supposed, and a want of union among them precluding any concert for public purposes. Dr. Franklin reached Philadelphia on his return, in June, with his health much impaired by the hardships of the journey. He now gave his undivided attention to his duties in Congress, having declined his election as representative in the Assembly, and resigned his appointment as a member of the Committee of Safety.

The subject of independence of the mother country had now been for some time before the nation, by newspaper essays, pamphlets, popular

discussion in public meetings, and private and fire-side conversations. Franklin was, from the first, one of the advocates of early action, and was appointed, with Jefferson, John Adams, Sherman, and Livingston, upon the committee which drafted the famous instrument. The paper was from the pen of Jefferson, and received in committee only a few verbal alterations, suggested by Franklin and Adams. Congress debated upon it three days, and in that time made nearly a hundred verbal and other alterations, and struck out two entire clauses. The curious reader who desires to compare the Declaration as reported, with the paper as adopted, will find the original draft, as preserved by Jefferson, printed in a parallel column with the Declaration, in the notes to the first volume of Marshall's *Life of Washington*.

These alterations could not, of course, be made, without a great deal of debate, and, in the course of it, many strong expressions of censure were made upon portions of Mr. Jefferson's draft. Of course the author of the paper was disturbed and annoyed. Dr. Franklin was sitting near him, and, for his consolation, related an anecdote which has been very frequently quoted. Mr. Jefferson, giving an account of the debate, says:

“I was sitting by Dr. Franklin, who perceived that I was not insensible to these mutilations. ‘I have made it a rule,’ said he, ‘whenever in my power, to avoid becoming the draftsman of papers to be reviewed by a public body. I took my lesson from an incident, which I will relate to you. When I was a journeyman printer, one of my companions, an apprentice hatter, having served out his time, was about to open shop for himself. His first concern was to have a handsome sign-board, with a proper inscription. He composed it in these words, *John Thompson, Hatter, makes and sells Hats for ready Money*, with a figure of a hat subjoined. But he thought he would submit it to his friends for their amendments. The first he showed it to, thought the word *hatter* tautologous, because followed by the words *makes hats*, which showed he was a hatter. It was struck out. The next observed that the word *makes* might as well be omitted, because his customers would not care who made the hats; if good and to their mind, they would buy, by whomsoever made. He struck it out. A third said he thought the words *for ready money* were useless, as it was not the custom of the place to sell on credit. Every one who purchased ex-

pected to pay. They were parted with; and the inscription now stood, 'John Thompson sells hats.' 'Sells hats!' says his next friend; 'why nobody will expect you to give them away. What then is the use of that word?' It was stricken out, and *hats* followed, the rather, as there was one painted on the board. So his inscription was reduced ultimately to *John Thompson*, with the figure of a hat subjoined. "

We have already noticed Dr. Franklin's aptness at repartee, and in this connection an instance of it occurred, which is memorable, as showing the ready humour of our philosopher in his 71st year. "We must be unanimous," said Hancock, "there must be no pulling different ways; we must all hang together." "Yes," said Franklin, "we must, indeed, all hang together, or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately."

There is a letter of his, also, written in 1775, which is remarkable, no less for its strong American and patriotic feeling, and its sacrifice of private friendships to the public cause, than for the epigrammatic neatness of its conclusion. It was addressed to his old friend, Mr. Strahan, and is as follows:

"Philada., July 5th, 1775.

"MR. STRAHAN:—

"You are a Member of Parliament, and one of that majority which has doomed my country to destruction. You have begun to burn our towns, and murder our people. Look upon your hands! They are stained with the blood of your relations! You and I were long friends; you are now my enemy, and I am

"Yours,

"B. FRANKLIN."

Having given one letter from Franklin to his friend, Mr. Strahan, we subjoin the close of another, written nine years afterward, when the struggle had closed triumphantly for the colonies. It was in answer to a letter received from Mr. Strahan. After talking upon general political principles, Franklin thus reviews the principal events of the, then, late war:

"Yankee was understood to be a sort of Yahoo, and the Parliament did not think the petitions of such creatures were fit to be received and read in so wise an assembly. What was the consequence of this monstrous pride and insolence? You first

sent small armies to subdue us, believing them more than sufficient, but soon found yourselves obliged to send greater; these, whenever they ventured to penetrate our country beyond the protection of their ships, were either repulsed and obliged to scamper out, or were surrounded, beaten, and taken prisoners. An American planter, who had never seen Europe, was chosen by us to command our troops, and continued during the whole war. This man sent home to you, one after another, five of your best generals, baffled, their heads bare of laurels, disgraced even in the opinion of their employers. Your contempt of our understandings, in comparison with your own, appeared to be much better founded than that of our courage, if we may judge by this circumstance, that in whatever court of Europe a Yankee negotiator appeared, the wise British minister was routed, put in a passion, picked a quarrel with your friends, and was sent home with a flea in his ear. But, after all, my dear friend, do not imagine that I am vain enough to ascribe our success to any superiority in any of those points. I am too well acquainted with all the springs and levers of our machine, not to see that our human means were unequal to our undertaking, and that, if it had not been for the justice of our cause, and the conse-

quent interposition of Providence, in which we had faith, we must have been ruined. If I had ever before been an Atheist, I should now have been convinced of the being and government of a Deity! It is he that abases the proud and favours the humble. May we never forget his goodness to us, and may our future conduct manifest our gratitude!

“But let us leave these serious reflections, and converse with our usual pleasantry. I remember your observing once to me, as we sat together in the House of Commons, that no two journeymen printers within your knowledge had met with such success in the world as ourselves. You were then at the head of your profession, and soon afterward became member of Parliament. I was an agent for a few provinces, and now act for them all. But we have risen by different modes. I, as a republican printer, always liked a form well *planed down*; being averse to those *overbearing* letters that hold their heads so *high* as to hinder their neighbours from appearing. You, as a monarchist, chose to work upon *crown* paper, and found it profitable; while I worked upon *pro patria* (often indeed, called *fools-cap*) with no less advantage. Both our *heaps hold out* very well, and we seem likely to make a pretty

good *day's work* of it. With regard to public affairs (to continue in the same style), it seems to me that your *compositors* in your *chapel* do not *cast off their copy well*, nor perfectly understand *imposing*: their *forms*, too, are continually pestered by the *outs* and *doubles* that are not easy to be *corrected*. And I think they were wrong in laying aside some *faces*, and particularly certain *headpieces*, that would have been both useful and ornamental. But, courage! The business may still flourish with good management, and the master become as rich as any of the company. * *

"I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,
B. FRANKLIN."

The letter we have just given, anticipates the date of our narrative several years, but is presented here, both as offering a strong contrast to the letter preceding, and as giving in Dr. Franklin's peculiar style, a brief summary of the history of the Revolution. The remainder of the public life of Franklin is connected with events so well known, that it will not be necessary to follow it with the minuteness with which we traced his life previous to the Revolution.

In 1776, the State of Pennsylvania again claimed the services of Franklin. He was President of the Convention which framed the first Constitution, and divided his time between the sessions of that body and those of Congress. In September of the same year, he was appointed, with John Adams and Edward Rutledge, to meet Lord Howe, and hear what propositions his lordship had to offer "in his private capacity." His public offers of *pardon*, on condition of submission, had been virtually rejected by the American people, and published by order of Congress, "in order," as the resolve expressed it, "that the few who still remained suspended by a hope, founded either in the justice or moderation of their *late* king [not *dead*, be it noted, but *denied*], may now at length be convinced, that the valour alone of their country is to save its liberties." The failure of any result from this interview, is of course known to our readers. No *pardon* could be received where no crime was acknowledged; and no *submission* could be thought of by those who had pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honour to the support of the Declaration of Independence.

In October, 1776, Congress gave another proof of the wisdom which guided their counsels, in the

appointment of Dr. Franklin at the head of a commission to transact the business of the United States at the Court of France. The other members, Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, were already in Europe. Dr. Franklin embarked for France in the sloop of war *Reprisal*, Captain Wickes, on the 27th of October, taking with him his two grandsons, William Temple Franklin, and Benjamin Franklin Bache. Before leaving Philadelphia he raised all the money he could command, between three and four thousand pounds, and placed it, as a loan, at the disposal of Congress.

This was indeed a signal mark of his patriotism, and of his confidence in the success of the stand taken by his countrymen. To estimate it fully, it must be remembered that Franklin, from his long residence abroad, and his habits of acute observation, was better aware than any man living, of the power of England, and the fixed determination of the government of that country, to bring all its force to bear upon the object to which it stood committed. Another evidence of courage and patriotism was, his embarking upon so dangerous a mission. In his 71st year, he might reasonably have pleaded age and infirmity as reasons for remaining at home.

A sea voyage was not, in 1776, the every day affair that it now is; and to the ordinary dangers and inconveniences of the passage, were to be added the risk of capture, and the ignominious treatment which the "factious fellow," Franklin, would have received, had he fallen into the power of the enemy at this early period of the "rebellion," as it was as yet, universally termed.

CHAPTER XIII.

State of Feeling in France—Reception of Franklin in that Country—Popular Respect—His plain Habits—He forms new Friendships—His extensive Correspondence—Anecdotes—Franklin recommends Lafayette—Secret Advances to Franklin from England—The Draper's Remnant—Duties of the Commissioners—Difficulties in the performance—Lord Stormont's Insolence—Franklin's Philanthropy—Treaties with France—Public Recognition of the American Commissioners—Popular Enthusiasm.



VERY reader of history is familiar with the fact, that England and France were for centuries regarded as “natural enemies;” a consequence of kingcraft, and of regarding countries as royal estates, and the heritage of princes, rather than as the property of the people. The disputes of these royal heirs, formerly tested at the expense of the blood, and at the sacrifice of the happiness of the subject, are now viewed in a more common sense light, thanks to the rise of America as a nation! As one great and happy consequence of this change, wars are becoming more and more rare; and will one day, we trust, and that day not far distant, be classed

with other obsolete barbarisms. At the date of the commencement of the Revolutionary War in this country, France was uneasy under the humiliating terms which the last treaty between Great Britain and France had imposed upon the latter power. This circumstance, and the "natural enmity" already referred to, would have disposed France to receive with favour any messenger from the colonies, whose dismemberment from the mother country promised to cripple a haughty and imperious rival.

But when the unexpected arrival of FRANKLIN was announced, France was awake with enthusiasm, and the news of his appearance at Paris circulated instantly throughout Europe. No other man could have excited the sensation. As a philosopher, his brilliant discoveries had made his name everywhere respected. It was more than respected, it was *familiar and beloved*; for Poor Richard, the practical and humane philosopher of every-day life, had shrined the name of Franklin, as a household word, in almost every nation of Europe. As a politician and patriot, the recoil of the abuse heaped upon him in England, by Parliament and the Ministry, had given him a higher position than the longest and proudest pedigree could have conferred.

The ardent temperament of the French people

saw in him, not merely the representative but the personification of the new American republic. His portrait, and medallions bearing his venerable features, were everywhere displayed. Snuff-boxes, rings, and every other description of token; busts, prints, and pictures, in the production of which the best artists vied with each other, aided in the encouragement of a respect which amounted almost to idolatry. He was said to "join to the demeanour of Phocion the spirit of Socrates;" and, to borrow the language of Lacretelle, "men imagined they saw in him a sage of antiquity, come back to give austere lessons and generous examples to the moderns." Courtiers, soldiers, and people, men, women, and children, were full of his praises; and those who could obtain admittance to his honoured presence dwelt with attention upon his every word, and with respect and awe upon his features. Amid all the pomp of courts and glitter of fashion, he preserved his republican simplicity of manners and costume. His dignity and consistency of character conferred consequence upon trifles, and elevated what would have been regarded as weak affectation and eccentricity in another, into proud characteristics of the sage and republican, when practised by Franklin. And here we may make the suggestion,

that his character and standing authorized his departures from custom. The man made the eccentricities not merely tolerable but delightful—the eccentricities did not *make the man*. It is the overlooking of this distinction which renders imitators intolerable. They begin at the wrong end, and, copying the mannerisms, and even the follies and defects of their great models, betray their insignificance but the more palpably; as the long ears of the donkey converted the terrible lion's skin into a ridiculous mask.

The advantages which his situation and character conferred for the formation of friendships, were not passed unimproved by Dr. Franklin. It was an observation of Dr. Johnson's, that unless we desire to become isolated as we grow old, we must keep our friendships in repair, and fill up the gaps in the circle, which death or removal creates, by the formation of new acquaintances. Upon this principle Dr. Franklin acted, and made in France many delightful associations, after he had passed the three-score years and ten, which form the usual limit of man's pilgrimage. Nay, after that advanced period of life he acquired the ability of speaking and conversing in French, with which, as a written language, the reader will remember, he had acquainted

himself many years before. Some of his most amusing humorous writings, such as "The Whistle," and the "Dialogue with the Gout," were written at this advanced age, marked, as they are, with the vivacity and freshness which are usually found in early compositions.

His situation and character exposed him to an immense variety of applications for advice, information, and countenance. People purposing to emigrate, addressed him letters of inquiry relative to the character of his country, and the opening for various pursuits there. In answer to these inquiries he wrote and published for distribution a pamphlet entitled, "Information to those who would remove to America," which was immediately translated into German, and perhaps into other languages. This act of his recalls an anecdote related of him during his residence in Philadelphia. Having occasion to alter a building which he occupied, he found the workmen annoyed with the questions of passers by, and caused to be written and posted up, a full description of the purposed improvement, and a statement of his views in making it; a witty expedient which spared the time of the carpenter. But Dr. Franklin was never unwilling to impart information which could be of service. Having ascertained

the utility of gypsum, or, as it is usually called, plaster of Paris, as a dressing for land, he took an ingenious mode of notifying the public of the fact. He wrote, in a clover-field near the road, in great letters, "This has been plastered;" and the rich green letters raised by this process, palpably showed the excellence of the substance as a compost.

While individuals were seeking his advice, and the benefits of his wisdom, those in authority were not unmindful of his capacity. The King of France appointed him, in 1784, at the head of a commission of nine, to examine the claims of Animal Magnetism, which was then making a great noise in Paris. The report of these commissioners, as our readers are probably aware, was adverse to the claims of the "science," though it has been revived in our own times. Private projectors and discoverers called his attention to all sorts of inventions and theories; and he seems to have found leisure to examine many of them, as well as to prosecute his own philosophical writings and studies, and to revise an edition of his works which was published in London.

Among other letters, many were addressed to him by the friends and relatives of Europeans who had entered the American service, making inquiries relative to America and the war. But these bore a

small proportion to the number of letters addressed to him for advice, or for countenance and recommendation to Congress or to the Commander-in-Chief, in applications for command in the American army. The number of such applicants was so great, as seriously to embarrass Congress and Gen. Washington; particularly as one of Franklin's colleagues, Mr. Deane, was induced to make many engagements with foreign officers. This circumstance caused Mr. Deane's recall, and he was succeeded by John Adams. Franklin answered those who applied to him by stating, that he had no authority to make engagements of this nature; that the army was already full, and that no recommendation could create vacancies. One officer, however, he did recommend without hesitation; and when we have stated that the officer thus endorsed by him was Lafayette, we need hardly add that, in everything he said in his praise, he was borne out by the conduct of the illustrious Frenchman.

There was still another important matter, which engrossed much of Franklin's time. Repeated advances were made to him, by emissaries, and by letters from England, to bring about a reconciliation between the Colonies and Great Britain. That many of these overtures had the ministerial sanction

is now an admitted fact in history ; and the rest came from persons of influence, who would gladly have procured, through Franklin, the clue to some method by which the difficulty could be arrested, and the Provinces saved to the British empire. So highly were his knowledge of his countrymen and his influence with them estimated, that the representation of Benjamin Franklin would, at any time, have offered a sufficient basis on which to propose terms of reconciliation to Congress. But the firm old patriot mentioned only such terms as comported with the letter and spirit of the Declaration. To these the English Government was not ready to assent. One of these agents Franklin reminded of the former good advice which he had thrown away upon the English ministry, and then added, "I will, however, give a little more, but without the least expectation that it will be followed ; for none but God can, at the same time, give good counsel and wisdom to follow it." To another, who wrote to him, "*Take care of your own safety ; events are uncertain, and men are capricious ;*" Franklin answered, "I thank you for your kind caution ; but, having nearly finished a long life, I set but little value upon what remains of it. Like a draper, when one chaffers with him for a remnant, I am

ready to say, 'As it is only a fag end, I will not differ with you about it; take it for what you please.' Perhaps the best use such an old fellow can be put to, is to make a martyr of him." And when an attempt was made to lead him to distrust the French Government, by telling him he was surrounded with spies, he answered, "Dr. Franklin does not care how many spies are placed about him by the Court of France, having nothing to conceal."

The commissioners, Franklin, Deane, and Arthur Lee, were instructed to propose a treaty of commerce to France; and to endeavour to procure from that Court, at the expense of the United States, eight ships of war, manned and fitted for service; to borrow money, to procure and forward military stores, and to fit out armed vessels under the flag of the United States, if the French Court did not disapprove this measure. They were also instructed to sound the views of other nations, through their ambassadors in France, and to endeavour to procure from them the recognition of the independence of the United States. An early interview was given by Count Vergennes, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the American Commissioners. They were promised protection while in France; and that all privileges would be granted to American

commerce, that were compatible with the existing treaties with Great Britain. The ships of war were not granted; but the commissioners were informed that a loan of two millions of livres would be made to the United States, in quarterly instalments. This information came to the commissioners through a private channel, and they were told that the loan was from generous individuals, who wished well to the Americans, and that it was not expected to be repaid until after the peace. It subsequently appeared that this money came from the King's treasury. With this money, and other loans, the commissioners purchased stores, supplied American cruisers, and built two frigates, one at Amsterdam, and the other at Nantz. In these operations they were often impeded, as the British ambassador's spies detected their movements, and made remonstrances to the French Court, to which, of course, the colour of attention was given, and the form of interference was resorted to. But as the commissioners knew the actual feeling of the French Government, they were not deterred; but persevered, and by prudence and management, fulfilled the purposes of their mission, in the very delicate and trying circumstances in which they were placed.

Nor did they forget the dignity due their official

station, whether Great Britain was ready to acknowledge it or not. Finding that American prisoners, captured at sea, were treated with unjustifiable severity by England, they wrote to Lord Stormont, the English ambassador in Paris, suggesting an exchange of prisoners. To their first communication Lord Stormont vouchsafed no reply. To a second note he answered as follows: "The King's ambassador receives no application from rebels, unless they come to implore his Majesty's mercy." The commissioners sent back this arrogant missive, with the message: "We return this indecent paper for your lordship's more mature consideration." The English ministry, however, soon after this, entered into an arrangement, by which the exchange of prisoners was conducted according to the established usages of war. The American cruisers made so many captures, that policy compelled what Lord Stormont refused to the claims of humanity. In pleasing contrast to his lordship's insolent disregard of the common usages of civilization, we may mention with pride the conduct of Franklin. He wrote a circular letter to the American cruisers, requesting them, in case they should meet Captain Cook's vessel, on its return from a voyage of discovery, not to capture, detain, or plunder it of anything on

board, but to "treat the captain and his people with civility and kindness, affording them, as common friends of mankind, all the assistance in their power." In acknowledgement of this act of magnanimity, the British Board of Admiralty sent Dr. Franklin a copy of Cook's Voyages, when completed, with the approbation of the King; and Franklin received also, one of the gold medals struck by the Royal Society, in honour of Captain Cook. Another act of Franklin's humanity was, the granting of an annual passport to the vessel which carried supplies from London to the Moravian missionaries, on the coast of Labrador. He also gave a passport to a vessel carrying supplies from Dublin, to certain sufferers in the East Indies. And in this connection, though it does not properly belong here in the order of time, we may mention, as indicative of Franklin's enlarged views and philanthropic character, that, in the treaty between the United States and Prussia, he introduced an article against privateering, and providing for respect to private property, in the event of a war between the two nations.

After Franklin had been nearly a year in France, the American successes of 1777, the capture of Burgoyne, and other favourable circumstances, gave

the French Government warrant openly to espouse the cause which they had all along secretly encouraged. To have embarked in a war with England, which alliance with the United States necessarily presumed, while there existed any possibility that the States would return or be driven back to their allegiance as colonies, would have been exceedingly imprudent and impolitic on the part of France. And there can be no doubt that the manoeuvres of the British ministry made the matter appear uncertain much longer in Europe than it did to those in America. The offer of pensions, offices, and a peerage, to buy over the leading men among the Americans, which was brought forward by British emissaries, and which Franklin treated with cutting sarcasm and ridicule, was unquestionably intended more to operate upon those in Europe, who were disposed to treat with the Americans, than upon the Americans themselves. It was designed to create doubts of the incorruptibility and patriotism of the republicans, and to make those waver and wait the issue, who were disposed to assist them. Had the American commissioners trifled with the glittering bait, or seemed at all irresolute, the consequences must have been most injurious to the cause of their freedom.

In the winter of 1777-8, after the news of the capture of Burgoyne, and the Battle of Germantown, it was officially intimated to Dr. Franklin, that a renewal of the proposition for a treaty of commerce, with which he was charged, would be favourably received by the French Court. Negotiations were opened by a memorial to the Court, drawn up by Dr. Franklin, and signed by the commissioners. On the 12th of December the first official meeting was held, by the Count de Vergennes and M. Gérard on the one part, and the American commissioners on the other; and on the 6th of February, 1778, two treaties were signed, one the treaty of commerce, proposed by the American commissioners, the other a treaty of alliance, brought forward by the French Government, and contingent upon the occurrence of war between France and England. These two treaties were most liberal and magnanimous in their spirit, and no occasion was taken by France to obtain advantages, which would not have been readily granted by the United States in the most prosperous condition.

On the 20th of March, Dr. Franklin and his colleagues were presented to the King, and officially recognised as the representatives of an independent

nation. M. Hilliard D'Auberteuil, in describing the ceremony of presentation, says:

“Dr. Franklin was accompanied and followed by a great number of Americans, and individuals from various countries, whom curiosity had drawn together. His age, his venerable aspect, the simplicity of his dress, everything fortunate and remarkable in the life of this American, contributed to excite public attention. The clapping of hands and other expressions of joy, indicated that warmth of enthusiasm which the French are more susceptible of than any other people, and the charm of which is enhanced to the object of it by their politeness and agreeable manners. After this audience, he crossed the court on his way to the office of the minister of foreign affairs. The multitude waited for him in the passage, and greeted him with their acclamations. He met with a similar reception wherever he appeared in Paris.”

CHAPTER XIV.

Rejoicings at Valley Forge—Franklin appointed Minister Plenipotentiary—His onerous Duties—Letter of Count de Vergennes—The Treaty with England—Preparations for Franklin's Return—His Arrival at Philadelphia—His Welcome Home—His Election as President of Pennsylvania—Is chosen a Member of the Convention which formed the Constitution of the United States—Speeches in that Convention—Letter to Washington—Franklin's Last Illness—Closing Remarks.



HE two treaties with France, signed by the commissioners, were transmitted to America, and at once ratified by Congress. The event was the theme of joy and congratulation throughout the country; but nowhere was the intelligence received with more delight, than by the army encamped at Valley Forge. The news of the ratification of the treaties by Congress, was announced in a postscript to the Pennsylvania Gazette, the paper formerly conducted by Franklin, on the 2d of May; and on the 6th, by order of Gen. Washington, the army celebrated the event with rejoicings. The news was communicated to the several brigades by their chaplains, who read

the postscript mentioned above, offered up a thanksgiving to the Almighty Ruler of the Universe, whom it had pleased, as Washington expressed it in the orders of the day, "propitiously to defend the cause of the United American States, and, finally, by raising us up a powerful friend among the princes of the earth, to establish our liberty and independence on a lasting foundation." At the close of the parade, after a salute of thirteen guns and a running fire along the whole line, the army huzzaed, *Long live the King of France!* Then followed another salute of thirteen guns, and a similar compliment to the friendly European Powers; and, finally, another salute, and—*Huzza for the American States!* Thus happily did spring open upon the patriot army, after the terrible privations and hardships of that gloomy winter.

Having followed Franklin through the most interesting and trying of his public trusts, and reached a period when the history of his official acts is more familiar, because more public, we shall not dwell upon the remainder of his political history. In the autumn of 1778, the commission to France was dissolved, and Franklin, in his 73d year, was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary. He remained in France till July, 1785, when at his earnest re-

quest a successor was appointed in Mr. Jefferson, and Franklin closed his official residence of eight years and a half at the Court of France. His duties during this long period were most laborious, and included much which did not pertain to his functions as a public minister. For a long time he was burthened with maritime and mercantile affairs, to attend to which consuls should have been appointed. He wrote repeatedly to Congress, urging the appointment of such officers, and yet his request was not attended to until near the end of the war.

Nor did Congress so much as appoint him a Secretary of Legation, and he was obliged to discharge his multifarious duties with such assistance as could be rendered by his grandson. A man of talents and experience would have been of vast relief to the septuagenarian, now afflicted with disease, as well as the natural infirmities of age, and often confined to his house for many weeks. Franklin was invaluable to his country in obtaining supplies and loans. Not one of the vast number of drafts drawn on him during the war was permitted to be protested, or to pass the time of payment; notwithstanding that the failure to obtain money in other directions, and the exigencies of the public service, often threw very onerous difficulties upon

Franklin. A key to his success in meeting these responsibilities is found in his high character. Count de Vergennes wrote in 1780 to the French minister in the United States: "If you are questioned respecting our opinion of Dr. Franklin, you may say without hesitation, that we esteem him as much for the patriotism as for the wisdom of his conduct; and it has been owing in a great part to this cause, and to the confidence which we put in the veracity of Dr. Franklin, that we have determined to relieve the pecuniary embarrassments in which he has been placed by Congress." The letter of Count de Vergennes was in answer to one, in which it was mentioned that some parties in America were labouring to procure Franklin's recall. The Count admits that Franklin's great age made him less active than could be wished, but states that his recall would be inconvenient and disagreeable, and suggests the appointment of a Secretary of Legation. Franklin himself requested to be relieved a few months afterward, remarking that he was sensible of the infirmity of age, and begging for repose. But the importance of his services to his country induced Congress to delay, until, after his repeated requests, they appointed his successor in 1785, as we have already stated.

Franklin performed an important part in the negotiation of the treaty of peace with England, the correspondence of that power being opened with him, and the preliminary steps taken by the British Government under his advice. There were associated with him, John Jay, John Adams, and Henry Laurens. The history of this treaty is among the most interesting and mooted passages in American diplomatic annals, but we have not the space, nor is this the opportunity to discuss it. The news of its ratification by Congress, was received with joy by a people wearied with a long war of resistance against tyranny; and the successful close of a struggle, commenced under circumstances so adverse, was indeed an event calculated to inspire hearty rejoicings. Many could join in the language in which Franklin addressed a friend: "Thus the great and hazardous enterprise we have been engaged in is, God be praised, happily completed; an event I hardly expected I should live to see." The preliminary or provisional treaty was signed November 30th, 1782; the definitive treaty on the 3d of September, 1783.

After the peace Franklin's duties became much lighter, though his office still remained anything but a sinecure. When he left France, it was with the

most affectionate wishes of his personal friends, and the proudest testimonials of respect from those with whom he had held official intercourse. His unobtrusive method of making the preparations for his departure, by which his intention was not known until he was on the point of putting it into execution, prevented the tender of the high honour of a frigate to bear him home, which the French Minister of the Marine would have offered him. The Queen's litter, borne on Spanish mules, was obligingly offered for his conveyance from Passy, near Paris, where he resided, to Havre de Grace; and the six days occupied by this journey, were a sort of triumphal progress, the inhabitants of the intervening towns paying him distinguished honour. From Havre he crossed over to Southampton, where he remained four days, and was met by the Bishop of St. Asaph's and other English friends. He embarked on the 27th of July, and arrived at Philadelphia on the 14th of September. Active in mind still, and improving all his leisure, he wrote on this passage his paper on improvements in navigation, and on smoky chimneys, both of which were published in the transactions of the American Philosophical Society. As this capacity for mental labour would indicate,

he supported the inconveniences of the voyage remarkably well.

He had need of all his physical strength to support the gratifying enthusiasm of his reception by his townsmen, and to acknowledge the courteous and grateful welcome with which his countrymen received him. A large concourse of the inhabitants of Philadelphia met the patriot and philosopher as he landed at Market Street wharf. The bells rang peals of welcome, and cannons were fired, while a large body of people attended the veteran servant of his country to the door of his dwelling—a house which at one time, during the eventful years of his last residence abroad, had served as the quarters of British officers. To a friend he wrote, soon after he was again domiciled: “I have got into my *niche*, after being kept out of it twenty-four years by foreign employments. It is a very good house, that I built so many years ago to retire into, without being able until now to enjoy it. I am again surrounded by my friends, with a fine family of grandchildren about my knees, and an affectionate, good daughter and son-in-law to take care of me. And after fifty years’ public service, I have the pleasure to find the esteem of my country with regard to me undiminished.”

General Washington and Mr. Jay were among the first to welcome him home, as soon as his arrival was known. The Assembly of Pennsylvania presented him a congratulatory address on the next day after he landed. The Philosophical and other societies, and the Faculty of the University, tendered him similar compliments, and congratulatory letters flowed in upon him from all directions. To these he returned prompt answers, and with many of the friends whom he had made in Europe, he kept up, until death, a regular and cheerful correspondence; which argued that, though in body an octogenarian, in mind he was a youth still, in everything save experience.

Nor was his public life yet ended. He was hardly seated in his house, before he was elected a member of the Supreme Executive Council of the State, under the then constitution; and the next autumn he was elected President of Pennsylvania, that being the title then of the executive. At his first election, he had seventy-six out of seventy-seven votes, the President being elected by the Council and Assembly; and at the next two elections he received a unanimous vote; being chosen for three years, and ineligible by the constitution for a fourth term. In 1787 he was chosen a member

of the convention which met in Philadelphia for the formation of the Constitution of the United States; and, although now in his 82d year, he was regular in his attendance, and an active member of the convention. His speeches, some of which were written out and published, were short, but clear, practical, and to the point. We subjoin two specimens. The first accompanied a motion for daily prayers, the convention having then been some weeks in session, without making much progress.

“In the beginning of the contest with Britain,” said he, “when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard; and they were graciously answered. All of us, who were engaged in the struggle, must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favour. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful friend? or do we imagine we no longer need his assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time; and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, *that God governs in the affairs of men*. And, if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an

empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, sir, in the Sacred Writings, that, 'except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this; and I also believe that, without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel; we shall be divided by our little, partial, local interests, our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a by-word down to future ages. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing government by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war, and conquest. I therefore beg leave to move, that henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business; and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service."

This motion did not prevail; perhaps from the feeling of the members that, as they had begun wrong in this particular, so would they persist—a very common but lame excuse for the neglect of our duties. The conclusion of his speech upon the adoption of the constitution, contains sentiments

which would do much benefit, if generally adopted now in our country.

“I consent to this constitution, because I expect no better, and because I am not sure that it is not the best. The opinions I have had of its *errors* I sacrifice to the public good. I have never whispered a syllable of them abroad. Within these walls they were born, and here they shall die. If every one of us, in returning to our constituents, were to report the objections he has had to it, and endeavour to gain partisans in support of them, we might prevent its being generally received, and thereby lose all the salutary effects and great advantages resulting naturally in our favour among foreign nations, as well as among ourselves, from our real or apparent unanimity. Much of the strength and efficiency of any government, in procuring and securing happiness to the people, depends on *opinion*, on the general opinion of the goodness of that government, as well as of the wisdom and integrity of its governors. I hope, therefore, for our own sakes, as a part of the people, and for the sake of our posterity, that we shall act heartily and unanimously in recommending this constitution, wherever our influence may extend, and turn our future thoughts and endeavours to the means of having it *well administered*.

On the whole, sir, I cannot help expressing a wish, that every member of the convention who may still have objections to it, would with me on this occasion doubt a little of his own infallibility, and, to make *manifest* our *unanimity*, put his name to this instrument."

It was one of Dr. Franklin's opinions, that in a democratic government there should be no offices of profit; for he held that the pleasure of serving one's country, and the respect which office confers, form a sufficient reward, and in a pecuniary point, the officer elected by the people should be content with a bare support. And as his circumstances were easy, and he did not need the salary of President of Pennsylvania, he devoted it to purposes of public utility. For the whole of his public life, it has been computed, that his perquisites and salaries were not equivalent to his expenses. While thus engaged in public business, he still found time to pursue his philosophical inquiries. He acted also as President of the Philosophical Society, and the societies for political inquiry, and for alleviating the miseries of prisons; besides presiding over others, and maintaining his interest in various associations for the public benefit. He was indefatigable to the last, retaining his active solicitude for the Academy,

now the University, the establishment of which he had promoted forty years before; and writing several articles for publication, upon that subject and others. The last efforts of his pen, for the public eye, were devoted to humane and philanthropic purposes, the relief of the suffering and the defence of the weak. How much he suffered himself, and how reasonably, had he been a selfish man, he might have restricted his thoughts to his own case, may be gathered from the following extract of a letter to Gen. Washington, written on the 16th of September, 1789, and affectionately answered by his illustrious compatriot, who never let an opportunity pass of paying personal respect to Franklin:

“My malady renders my sitting up to write rather painful to me; but I cannot let my son-in-law, Mr. Bache, part for New York, without congratulating you by him on the recovery of your health, so precious to us all, and on the growing strength of our new government under your administration. For my own personal ease I should have died two years ago; but, though those years have been spent in excruciating pain, I am pleased that I have lived them, since they have brought me to see our present situation. I am now finishing my eighty-fourth year, and probably with it my career in this life;

but, in whatever state of existence I am placed hereafter, if I retain any memory of what has passed here, I shall with it retain the esteem, respect, and affection, with which I have long been, my dear friend, yours most sincerely."

Thus he remained until the April following. The subjoined account of his last illness, is from the pen of Dr. John Jones, his physician :

"The stone, with which he had been afflicted for several years, had, for the last twelve months of his life, confined him chiefly to his bed ; and, during the extremely painful paroxysms, he was obliged to take large doses of laudanum to mitigate his tortures. Still, in the intervals of pain, he not only amused himself by reading, and conversing cheerfully with his family and a few friends who visited him, but was often employed in doing business of a public, as well as of a private nature, with various persons who waited upon him for that purpose ; and in every instance, displayed not only the readiness and disposition to do good, which were the distinguishing characteristics of his life, but the fullest and clearest possession of his uncommon abilities. He also not unfrequently indulged in those *jeux d'esprit* and entertaining anecdotes, which were the delight of all who heard them.

“About sixteen days before his death, he was seized with a feverish disposition, without any particular symptoms attending it till the third or fourth day, when he complained of a pain in his left breast, which increased till it became extremely acute, attended by a cough and laborious breathing. During this state, when the severity of his pains drew forth a groan of complaint, he would observe, that he was afraid he did not bear them as he ought; acknowledging his grateful sense of the many blessings he had received from the Supreme Being, who had raised him, from small and low beginnings, to such high rank and consideration among men; and made no doubt but that his present afflictions were kindly intended to wean him from a world in which he was no longer fit to act the part assigned him. In this frame of body and mind he continued, until five days before his death, when the pain and difficulty of breathing entirely left him, and his family were flattering themselves with the hopes of his recovery; but an imposthume which had formed in his lungs, suddenly burst, and discharged a quantity of matter, which he continued to throw up while he had power; but, as that failed, the organs of respiration became gradually oppressed; a calm, lethargic state succeeded; and, on the 17th instant (April, 1790), about eleven o'clock at night. he quietly expired,

closing a long and useful life of eighty-four years and three months."

The funeral ceremonies took place on the 21st of April, attended by a concourse of people, computed at from twenty to twenty-five thousand. The city authorities, the Legislature of Pennsylvania, the faculty and students of the University, and all, or nearly all the literary and other societies of Philadelphia attended, to testify their respect to the memory of the philosopher, the patriot, and philanthropist. Muffled bells tolled during the progress of the ceremony, and as the earth closed over the great dead, discharges of artillery marked the conclusion of all that respect and affection could do for the mortal remains of Benjamin Franklin. He was interred by the side of his wife, in the cemetery of Christ Church, at the corner of Mulberry (or Arch) and Fifth streets. A plain marble slab, bearing no other inscription than their names and the time of their decease, marks the spot.

The Congress of the United States was in session at New York at the time of Franklin's decease, and passed an appropriate resolution, directing the wearing of the customary badge of mourning for thirty days. Dr. William Smith, Provost of the College, and a member of the Philosophical Society, delivered a eulogy on the character of the sage, by

appointment of the Society; and President Stiles, of Yale College, by appointment of the faculty, delivered a Latin oration.

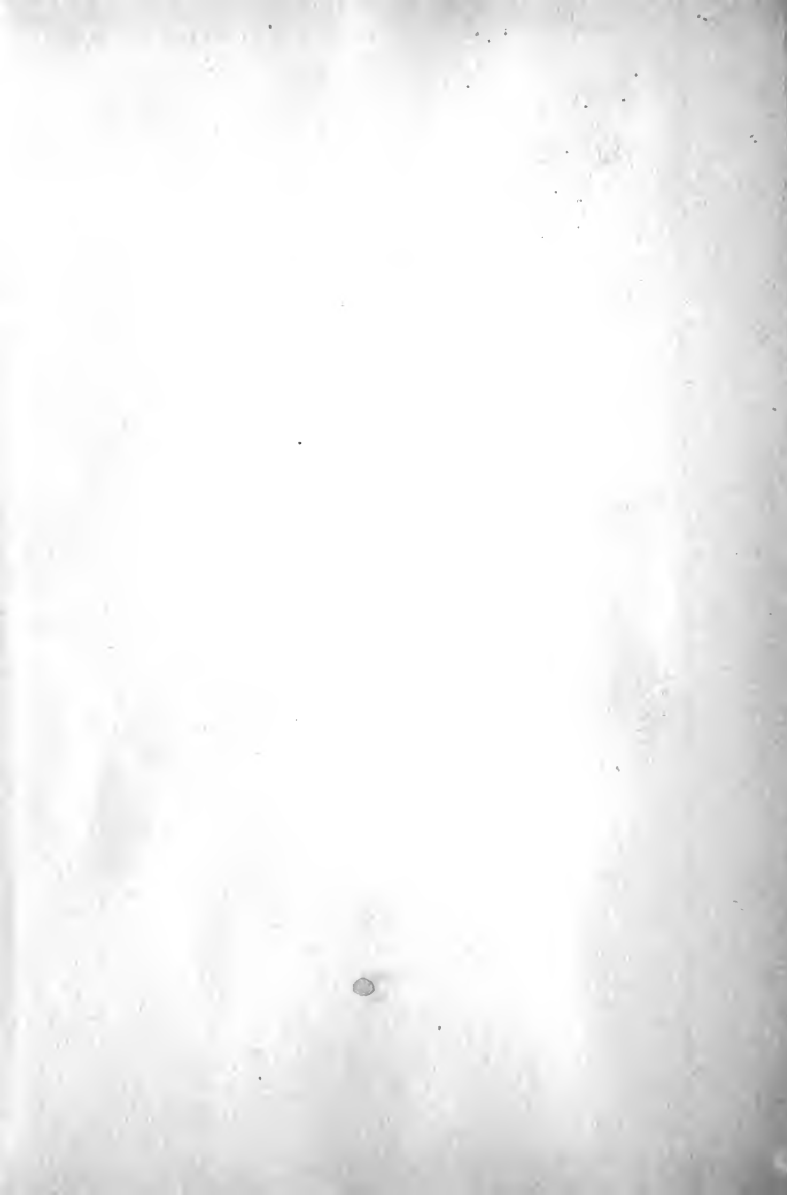
When the intelligence of the death of Franklin was received in France, the event was solemnly and feelingly announced in the Assembly, and a motion, of which Rochéfoucault and Lafayette were the seconders, was unanimously carried, that the National Assembly wear mourning for three days. The Assembly also ordered a bust of Franklin to be placed in their hall. The authorities of Paris ordered a public celebration in honour of his memory. The Abbé Fauchet pronounced a eulogy in the rotunda of the corn market, the auditors of which were all arrayed in mourning; and the place was also hung with tokens of the same character. The ceremony was most solemn and impressive. Official accounts of these proceedings were transmitted to Congress, and appropriately acknowledged.

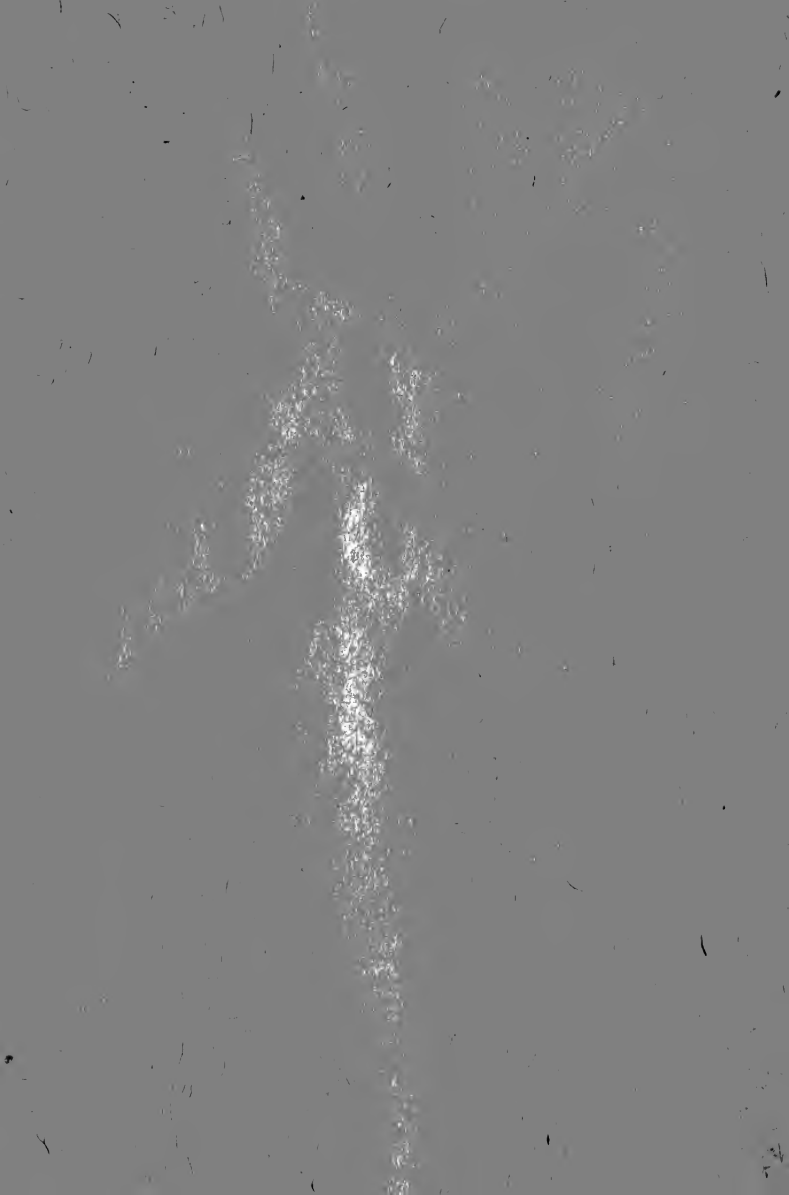
Of the two sons of Dr. Franklin, one, William, died in London, in 1813, leaving an only son, since dead without issue. The other son died in childhood. There are, therefore, no living descendants of Dr. Franklin, bearing his name. His daughter Sarah married Richard Bache in 1767, and died in 1808. Their descendants are numerous.

In Dr. Franklin's will, many testimonials were distributed to Washington and others of his friends, and many affectionate memorials to connections; his daughter Sarah receiving the larger portion of his estate. To the city (then town) of Boston, he gave one hundred pounds sterling, the interest to be applied annually to the purchase of silver medals, as honorary rewards to pupils in the grammar schools. He gave also one thousand pounds each to Philadelphia and Boston, to be loaned in small sums to young mechanics. The medal bequest has answered the purpose of the testator; the other legacies have been less useful; though that fact does not detract from the excellence of the motive in the donation, which was to encourage industry, frugality, and integrity.

Industry, FRUGALITY, INTEGRITY—such are the leading lessons of FRANKLIN'S LIFE. From them, all other virtues, under Providence, are derived. But the foundation of all virtue is trust in God, and prayer for His assistance: the reward of all is gratitude to that Heavenly Father, who has made, in his wisdom, our habitual acknowledgement of his mercies the greatest and best mode of enjoying them.

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